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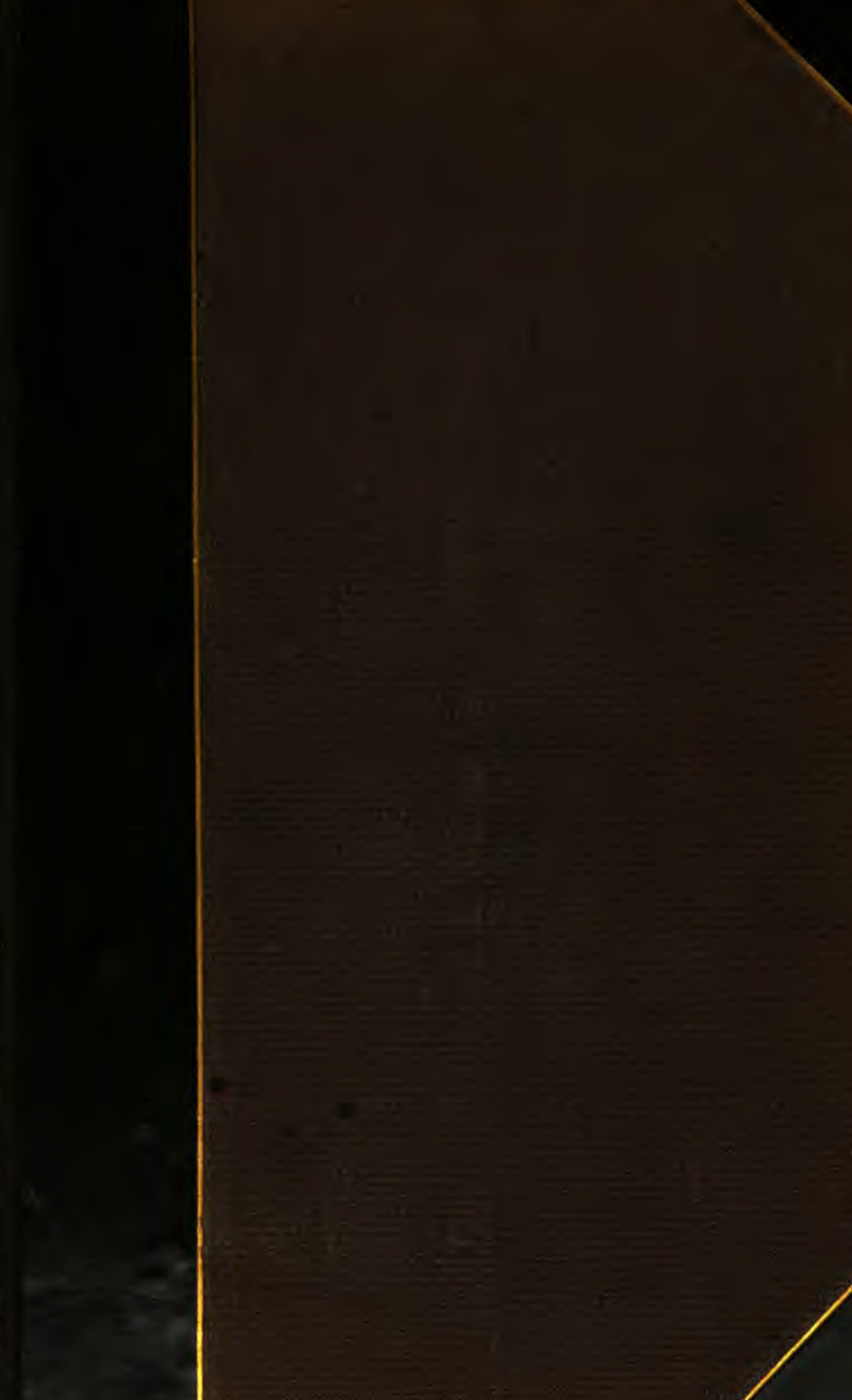
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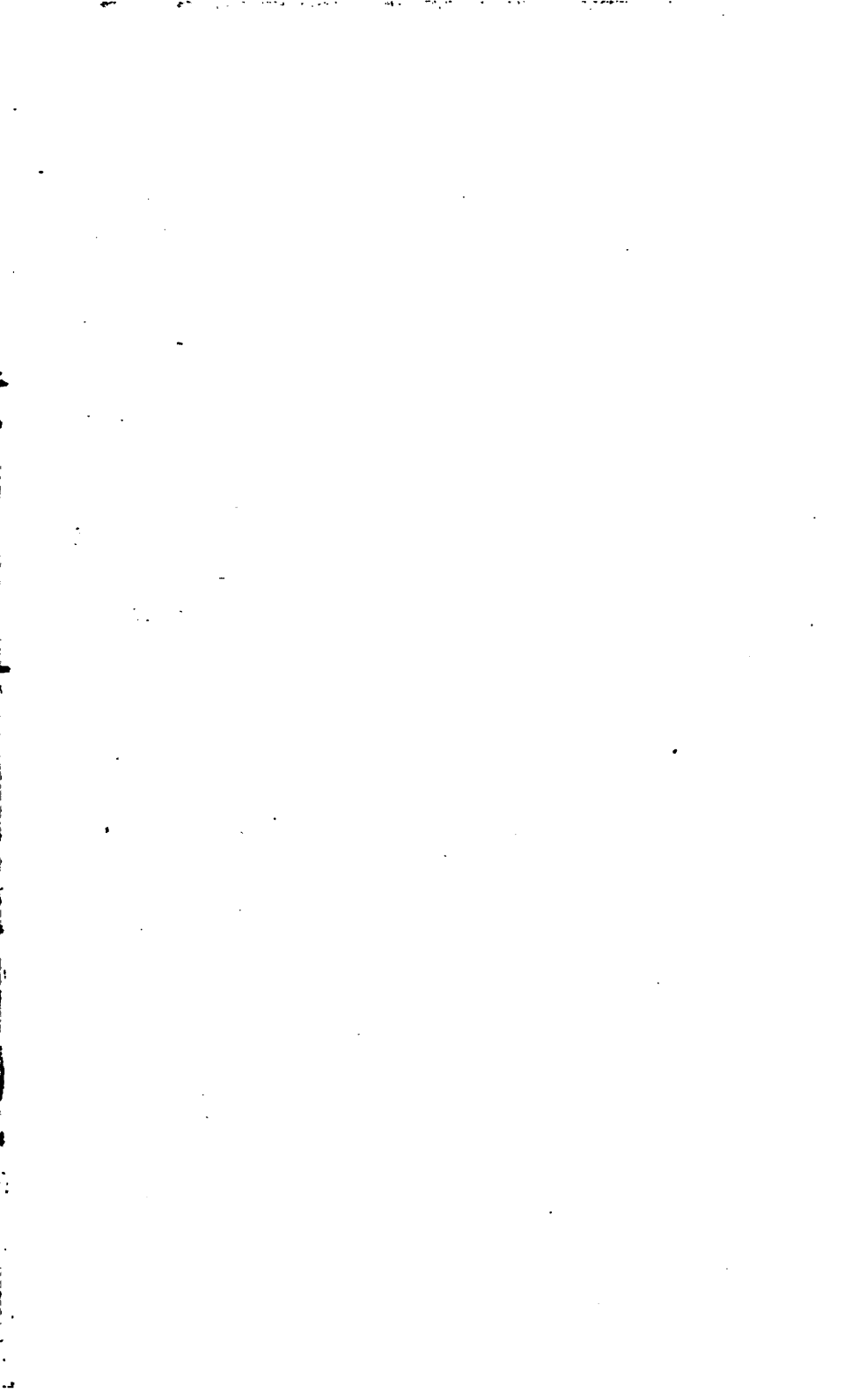


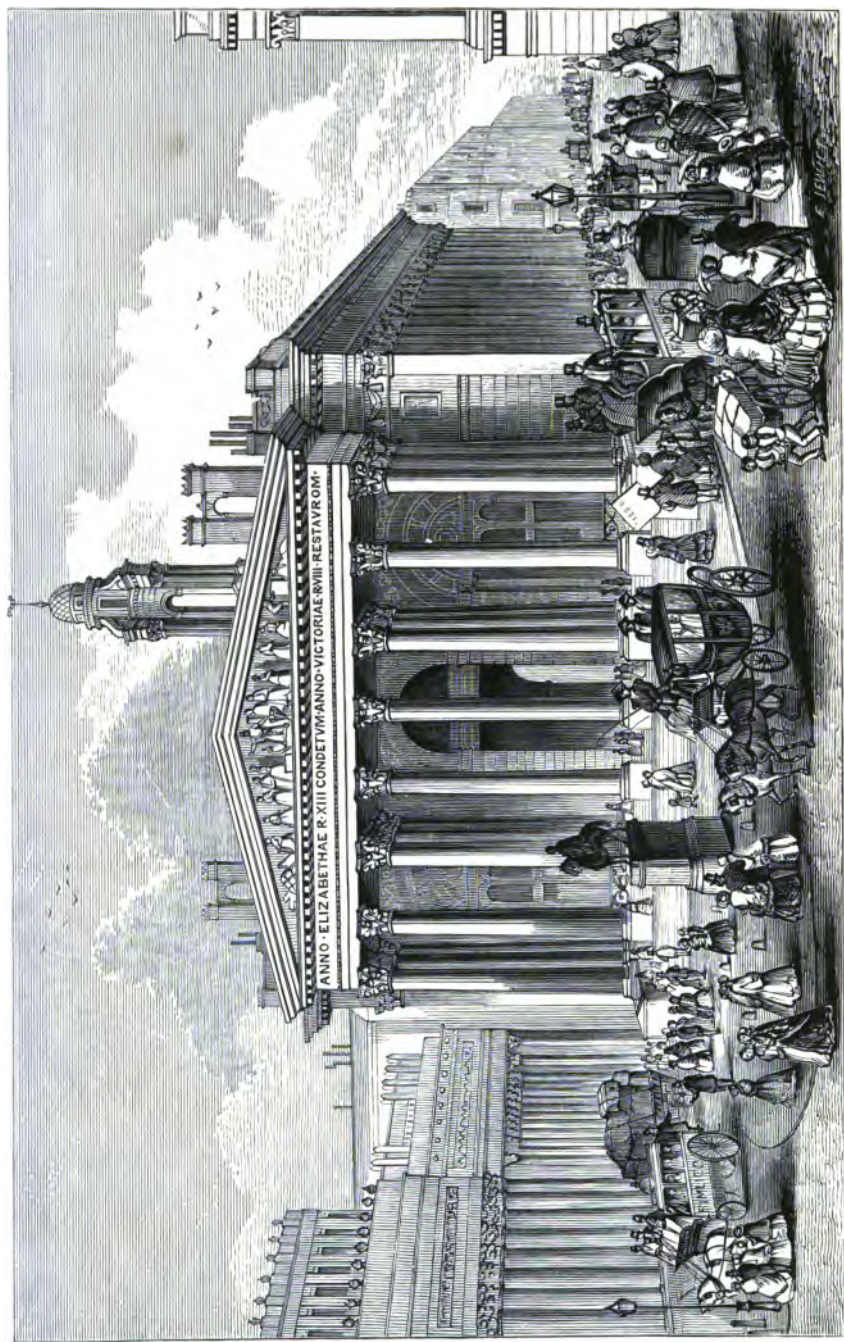
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M. BILLING UNDER BIRM?





WEST FRONT OF THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

THE  
HISTORY OF PROGRESS

IN  
GREAT BRITAIN.

BY  
ROBERT KEMP PHILP.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS,  
BY  
W. NEWMAN, C. MELVILLE, H. SAUNDERS, Etc.

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## PREFACE.

IN endeavouring to review in these pages some of the more interesting facts and characteristics of the national progress, we have devoted a considerable portion of our space to that one deeply-interesting subject, which includes in its influence almost every other subject with which the annalists of progress can have to deal—Liberty! or, to express that word in its more common and dual aspect, Civil and Religious Liberty! Without that priceless possession all other possessions are of little value; with it, all other needful things must come in time.

Perhaps the most striking and pertinent illustration that we can here give of the eternal interest and value that inheres in such questions, is to recall for a moment the nature of certain passing events which have had almost a dramatic fitness to the current of our publication. While we were writing of Wycliffe, and the Pope's temporal power, and the dawn of the Reformation in England (all matters that Englishmen considered as settled so long ago and done with, that they could now possess only a mild historical and antiquarian interest), Europe was again resounding with the anguished cries of the Papacy,—threatened with the loss of its temporal dominion, and re-agitating, in the hope of worldly salvation, the old fallacies and old superstitions, and claiming, with its old audacity, the power of infallible judgment, and the privilege of complete immunity from the usual principles and duties of enlightened government. While we were speaking of the precautions our (Catholic) forefathers had found it necessary to take against the kidnapping of children by Catholic monks, the existing Catholic priesthood was busy with the Mortara case; while we were showing how, in the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, Romanism, by refusing to purify itself, and by denying that it could be otherwise than pure, brought forth Protestantism, its true and noble, but not loved or cherished child;—while we were showing these things, that same Romanism was proving itself ready and

anxious to repeat precisely the same errors as before, and to give to Italy, its own home and native country, the same temptations for breaking away from its dominion that had been so irresistible with us. And the signs are growing more and more numerous and significant that it will be as felicitously successful as usual in these efforts. Other and similar correspondences between the past and present facts of Religious Liberty will occur to attentive readers.

And it has been just the same in matters of Civil Liberty: if there be one single question over which we have found ourselves alike tempted and compelled to pause, in order to study its phases of development, on account of its strange interest and profound value, it is that of the growth and successful assertion by the House of Commons of the exclusive right of taxing the people. Out of that little acorn has grown the mighty tree of English freedom. To kill it in its birth, or to cripple it in its advancing strength, kings like John and Henry III. have tried alternately the utmost resources of fraud and force; and when the latter did apparently succeed at last, by the overthrow of De Montfort and the national party, it was really only a decisive defeat that his principles, or want of principles, experienced; for his son, to whom personally he owed the conquest, gave up, as King Edward I., all that had been fought for, when he formally and solemnly ratified the coveted principle—that taxation of the people was to be performed by the people, through the instrumentality of the House of Commons as its representatives. And so the principle lived, grew, flourished, and reached maturity; and then, when a new and more deadly enemy, Charles I., attacked it, the only result was—civil war for the nation, a scaffold for the king, and final reconfirmation of the principle and of its safeguards, at the Revolution of 1688.

And yet now, in our own days, after a long period of political settlement, and when we appeared to be getting more and more free from the hate and the confusion, the strife and the trickeries of party, and in every way better fitted for dealing with the many and intricate and pressing social questions that involve the welfare and happiness of the millions, and whatever of practical civil or religious liberty they are destined to enjoy,—at this moment, while we were tracing the progress of the establishment of the great constitutional law, which underlies all our rights and liberties, and national power and prosperity,—at this very moment were the Lords venturing, for reasons best known to themselves, to re-open the whole question by their rejection of the

ministerial bill for removing the paper duty. It is impossible to speculate just now on the momentous consequences that may result if they should persist in their attempt, or if the House of Commons should not insist upon—and persist in—compelling the Lords to go back. The principle is clear. If the precedents are not equally so, we must do what our forefathers did, add a new precedent, in the spirit of our former legislation, to make them clear too. How but by such processes did existing precedents begin? how else can any advance ever be made?

Need we give any more illustrations of the vital nature, the ever-living interest to us, of such questions as the Progress of Civil and Religious Liberty?

While thus indicating our sense of the importance of these subjects, let us not be supposed to be unaware how little we ourselves have been able to do, in the following pages, for their elucidation or enforcement. If we have taken up a large portion of our available space in dealing with them, we cannot but feel, as we have all along painfully felt, that our entire two volumes would have been inadequate for their due development. Some day, so grand a subject will, we doubt not, meet with its own historian, who shall be worthy of it. Meantime, we commend our own brief and imperfect notices to the reader's indulgence, and shall only be too happy if they at all obtain his sympathy. Whatever their faults, they at least have been written by one who ardently desires to see his country, and all mankind, in the fullest possible enjoyment of all that is comprised in the noble words Civil and Religious Liberty, because he believes that those words, rightly understood and determinedly acted on, will not only tend to elevate the individual nature of man, but bring the entire human family into more harmonious relations, and raise it to an altogether higher level of domestic life.

The subjects included in the two volumes are complete as far as relates to themselves; but to perfect the History of Progress as a whole, it will be necessary, at some future time, to record the progress of steam machinery, navigation, and locomotion; the application of electricity to the transmission of telegraphs; and the construction of railways throughout Great Britain and Ireland, and in many parts of her remote possessions. The experiment now being tried, upon a magnificent scale, in the first voyage of the Great Eastern; the apparent certainty that at no distant time a transatlantic telegraphic

communication will be effected; the proposed conversion of the Thames Tunnel into a railway; the works now in progress for the formation of a railway underneath the metropolis; and the proposed application of pneumatic force to the transmission of despatches and small parcels, rendered it desirable that the issues of these great undertakings—so soon to be consummated—should be made a part of the concluding volume of this history. Probably, when these undertakings have been completed, the work of Progress will thenceforward consist rather of the application of inventions already tested, than of the introduction of new applications, for the genius of man appears to have ransacked the stores of Natural Philosophy, and already to have gleaned therefrom every element of previously hidden power.

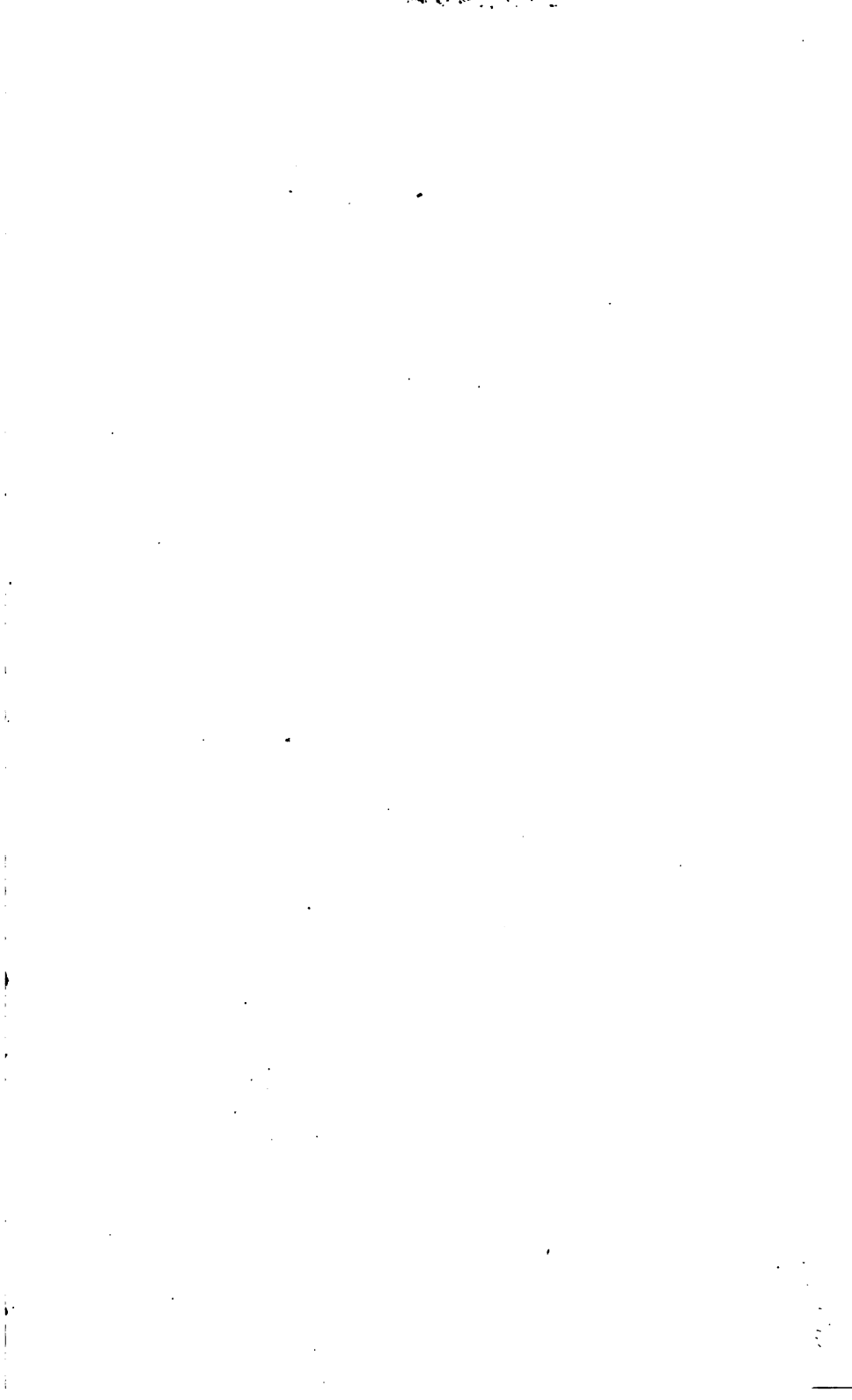
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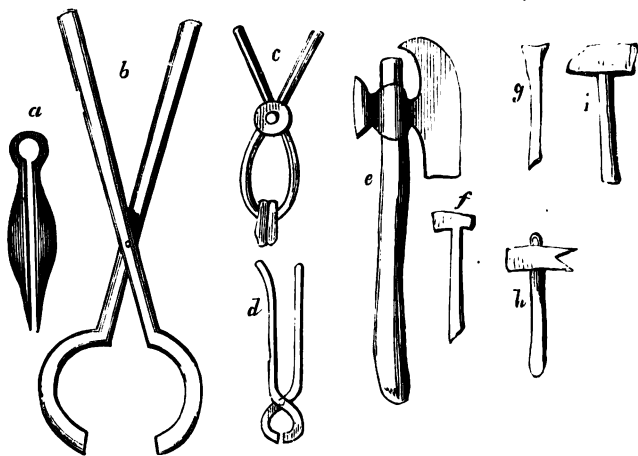
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SAXON TOOLS.

*a* Pair of Shears.  
*b* Pincers, or Tongs.  
*c* Other Pincers.

*d* Nippers.  
*e* Axe.  
*f* Hammer.

*g* Chisel.  
*h* } Hammers.  
*i* }



EARLY PROCESS OF COINING.

# HISTORY OF PROGRESS IN GREAT BRITAIN.

## PROGRESS OF MANUFACTURES.

### CHAPTER I.

#### PERIOD OF MANUAL LABOUR.



THE ARCHÆOLOGISTS who have endeavoured to trace the history of the inhabitants of Britain in times antecedent to Cæsar's invasion, have divided it into three epochs, distinguished by progressive advances in the manufacturing arts, called *the stone period*, *the bronze period*, and *the iron period*. In the first, the implements used by the Britons as weapons in war, or as knives, hatchets, and hammers, were fashioned out of flints or other hard stones; in the second period, they had learned the art of manufacturing bronze, made by a mixture of copper and tin; and in the third, the more difficult art of

working in iron had been acquired. In tracing the progress of manufactures from those early times to the present day, two different and more important divisions of the subject present themselves; not depending on the nature of the raw material of manufactures, but on the character of the agency by which the work is accomplished. The PERIOD OF MANUAL LABOUR and the PERIOD OF MACHINERY are distinctly marked epochs in the progress of manufactures and civilization.

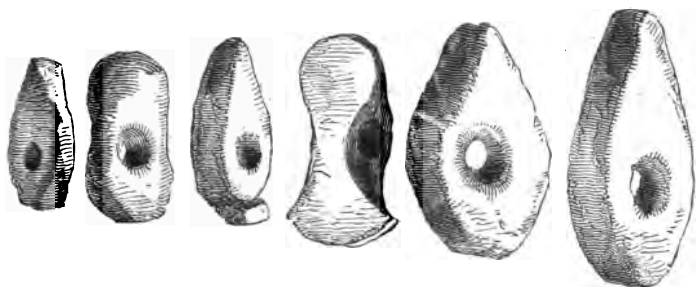
Though the latter period cannot be dated farther back than one hundred and fifty years, and its full development by the aid of steam-power is comparatively but the work of yesterday, the great impulse which the combined agency of machinery and steam-power has given to manufacturing industry of all kinds, renders the progress during that brief period of much more importance than the slow and imperfect advances of the preceding eighteen centuries.

It is a remarkable fact, that the country which now surpasses all other countries in the world in the extent, the variety, and we may add, with but few exceptions, in the excellence of its manufactures, was among the latest of those nations of Europe in which manufacturing industry was developed. Whilst among the civilized states of the south, manufactures of various kinds had long before attained a high degree of perfection, and even among the neighbouring Gauls many of the useful arts had been cultivated, but few signs of advancing civilization were apparent among the majority of the inhabitants of Britain. This is the more extraordinary, since, in the south-western portions of the island at least, they had long been brought in contact with civilized life, by trafficking with the Phœnicians for the mineral produce of the country; the tin of Britain, of which the natives made no use, having constituted for many ages an important material in extending the refinements of civilization over a large portion of the globe.

At the time of the first Roman invasion, it is probable that the three states of manufacturing progress indicated by the *stone*, the *bronze*, and the *iron* periods, were co-existent in different parts of the country. In the south-eastern and in the south-western portions of the island, where intercourse with the continent of Europe and with the Phœnicians had introduced some knowledge of the art of working in metals, the manufacture of bronze, and partially of iron, might have been acquired; while in the central districts, and in the north,



the ruder implements of stone continued in use. The war-chariot of the Britons \* exhibited considerable advance in the application of



STONE HAMMER-HEADS, AXES, ETC.

mechanical agents and of horse-power for the purposes of war. The metal scythes fixed on the sides of the chariot are presumed to have been made of iron, for the rusted relics of one of those engines of war, found in a British tumulus, indicated the presence of that metal, whilst the trappings for the horses were made of bronze, and were in good preservation.

Four kinds of chariots are mentioned as having been in use among the Britons; one a carriage ridden in by the chiefs, another used as a cart, and two war-chariots, for single warriors, or for two or more.

There are abundant remains of the flint arrow and spear-heads and of the flint knives used by the Britons. In manufacturing these rude implements, the nodules of flint were broken into flat pieces with sharp edges, and were fashioned by hammering into arrow-heads and into knives.†

\* Page 44, vol. i.

† The demand for these relics of the ancient Britons has induced an extensive fraudulent manufacture of flint knives and arrow-heads, which so skilfully imitate the originals, that it is difficult even for an experienced antiquary to distinguish the difference. A curious discovery of what are pronounced to be undoubtedly genuine flint-knives, has recently been made in the bone caves of Devonshire. In one of these caves, which was opened last year, near Teignmouth, these knives were found imbedded in the stalagmite floor, mingled with the fossil bones of elephants, lions, rhinoceri, and of other species of animals that are now extinct. The geologists and the antiquarians have been considerably staggered by this discovery, for the co-existence of the ancient Britons with those animals, which are supposed to have become extinct long before the creation of man, seems impossible. A previous discovery of the bones of human beings, mingled with those of similar species of animals, in some caves in France, was accounted for by the supposition

The other implements of the stone period are axes and hammer-heads, of which a great variety have been found, made of very hard stone. Antiquaries are much divided in opinion whether the former were battle-axes, or were used for other purposes; and in this division of opinion the difficulty of giving them a name has been compromised by calling them "Celts."



STONE MOULDS FOR CASTING CELTS.

Implements of a similar kind were afterwards cast in bronze, the matrices for the castings being sometimes shaped out of soft stone, at other times moulded in sand, and afterwards they were made of bronze. Specimens of the stone matrices have been discovered, in which the hollowed parts for the two sides of the instrument are carved out in separate stones, the surfaces of which lie flat together.

As an example of the earliest known method of casting metals in this country, we give the accompanying illustration of a matrix for a "Celt" cut in stone.

The opinions of antiquarians differ on the point whether the Britons had advanced so far in the knowledge of working metals, at the time of Cæsar's invasion, as to cast coins and medals. Numerous coins have been discovered in gold, silver, and bronze, which, if not the work of the ancient Britons, were no doubt made shortly after the landing of the Romans. The accompanying engravings, reproduced from our first volume, represent specimens of rude coins supposed

that the Gauls had taken refuge in those caves from the fury of Cæsar, and had perished there; and that thus their bones became mingled with those of extinct animals which had in antediluvian periods made those caves their places of abode. A similar explanation might reconcile the apparent anomaly of the recent discovery; for the formation of the stalagmite, in which the knives and bones are imbedded, might have occurred by the deposition of lime within a few centuries.

to be of ante-Roman date. The first one is plain on one side, and on the other side are portions of a horse and of a wheel, intended to represent a war-chariot. The design is very evident in the second specimen, which is a more finished production, and has a head crowned by a wreath of laurel on the other side. The latter most probably was made subsequently to the Roman invasion. Whatever doubt may exist as to the date of those coins, there can be no question that



BRITISH COINS.

the art of coining was carried to a great extent by Cunobeline at Camulodunum (Maldon), after his return from Rome, no less than forty different coins of that king having been found.

That pottery was not unknown to the ancient Britons, is evidenced from the relics of rude earthenware drinking vessels and of urns, which contained the ashes of their chiefs, discovered in barrows that were piled up antecedent to the invasion of the Romans. The Gauls, indeed, are known to have made earthenware vessels long before that period. A large specimen of British pottery was found in a barrow in Anglesea, and was supposed to have contained the ashes of Bronwen the Fair, aunt to Caractacus; some smaller specimens were drinking cups used by the Britons. The earthenware of which they were made was coarse and unglazed.

The original natives of Britain, like all other savage tribes, were either naked or covered themselves with skins when they required protection from the cold, and it seems doubtful whether at the time of

Cæsar's invasion they had acquired the art of making cloth. From the words of Cæsar, that "the Britons in the interior parts of the country are clothed in skins," it has been inferred that those whom he encountered were better clad; and it is most probable that the natives in the southern parts of Britain wore cloth either of their own manufacture, or imported from the Continent. In Cornwall and the neighbouring districts, also, there can be little doubt that cloths of various kinds had for centuries been obtained from the Phœnicians in exchange for the tin which they took away in large quantities. From the frequent intercourse of the Britons with the Gauls and Belgæ, among whom the arts of spinning, dressing, and weaving wool and flax were known, it may be assumed that the Britons had learned to make cloth before the Romans visited the island, and that they were not only clothed in woollen garments, but that the clothing they wore was of their own manufacture. It is related by Pliny that the ancient Gauls even excelled in dyeing cloth, for when noticing the great perfection that art had attained generally, he observes, "the people of Gaul beyond the Alps have invented a method of dyeing purple, scarlet, and all other colours, only with certain herbs." Woad is supposed to have been the principal vegetable product employed for that purpose, and that the "invention" originated from the experience gained in staining the naked body and skins, the same materials having been applied, naturally enough, to the dyeing of cloth. The deep blue, which was the predominant colour, indicates that woad was extensively used by the Britons as a colouring substance.

The interlacing of pliant osier twigs into various forms, and for various uses, constituted one of the earliest manufacturing arts of the Britons, and attracted the special notice of their conquerors. The coracles or small river boats\* were constructed of wicker-work covered with skins; and the baskets made in Britain were considered so remarkable, that specimens of them were taken to Rome as curious exemplifications of the manual products of the far distant islanders.

The preceding sketch of the state of manufactures in Britain at the time of the first Roman invasion, represents the inhabitants as having made but slight advances in the arts of civilized life, even in those portions of the island where intercourse with the other nations of Europe had been most frequent. Every kind of manufacture known to them had been acquired from the Gauls and Belgæ, and it must be

\* "Progress of Shipping," vol. i. p. 274.

inferred that the manufactures thus introduced among a barbarous people were reproduced by them with less skill than in the countries from which they were imported. Nor could it have been otherwise when the more perfect and more various manufactures of southern Europe were brought into Britain by the Romans. It required a long time before the refinements of a highly civilized nation could be appreciated by the rude natives; and it would be still longer before they acquired the arts connected with civilized life. Their conquerors paid little attention to their instruction in the useful arts, beyond the tillage of the soil, which was necessary to supply food for their army of occupation. Nevertheless, the settlement of the Romans in the country for a period of three hundred and sixty years, could not have failed to introduce among the natives some taste for the comforts and luxuries which they had seen enjoyed by the almost naturalized settlers; and together with the taste for their enjoyment a knowledge of the means of obtaining them. In the latter years of the Roman occupation, indeed, some of the mechanical arts seem to have been more advanced in Britain than in Germany, and it is stated that the Emperor Chlorus sent for British artificers to repair the cities of Germany which had been reduced to ruins during the wars.

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## CHAPTER II.

### MANUFACTURES IN THE SAXON PERIOD.

WHEN the Saxons first settled in England after the departure of the Romans, they occasioned a retrograde movement in the useful arts, in which they were less advanced than the native inhabitants. The long-continued struggles between the Britons and the in-pouring Saxons, who overran the country, had a seriously depressing effect on manufacturing industry; nor was it until the foundation of the Saxon Heptarchy and the introduction of Christianity into the country, that manufactures were again cultivated and improved.

St. Augustine and his monks came from Rome on a mission very different from that of Cæsar's. Instead of being actuated by the lust of conquest, spreading death and destruction over the land, the object

of the Christian invasion of Britain was to spread the knowledge of Christ and of everlasting life, to preach peace and good-will to all mankind. The fulfilment of this blessed mission was no easy task among a people so rude, that the attempt to Christianize them was considered so dangerous that those who first undertook it were frightened from their design by the reports they received of the savage character of the natives.



CARPENTERS AND THEIR TOOLS.

The success that attended the persevering efforts of Augustine and the diffusion of Christianity in Britain, were accompanied by a rapid diffusion of the arts of civilization. The monks not only acquired a knowledge of but practised the useful arts adapted to supply their own wants and those of the people, and by their teaching and example they succeeded in establishing many of the manufactures that were then known in Europe. Artisans from abroad, and those native workmen who had become most proficient, were employed in the monasteries. The artificers so engaged were millers, bakers, weavers, embroiderers, architects, carpenters, shoemakers, and smiths, and those who worked in the precious metals. Among the monks who were renowned for their skill in mechanical arts was St. Dunstan, who lived in the tenth century. It is stated in the life of that saint, that when young he had acquired such skill in designing, that he was requested by a religious lady of rank to draw figures, which she afterwards

formed with threads of gold; and when more advanced in life he was said to have had "an admirable genius for various arts, and particularly excelled in writing and engraving letters, and in making any thing he pleased in gold, silver, brass, and iron."\* It was when engaged in his smithy, the legend tells us, that the devil, in an unlucky hour for himself, beset the saint, who, with his hot pincers ready at hand, seized his satanic majesty by the nose, and caused him bitterly to repent having intruded within the precincts of the forge.

There is little doubt that the Romans smelted the iron ore which is so abundant in the midland part of the country, and that they had established forges for working in iron in various parts of Britain. The manufacture of iron being essential in war, it would naturally be one of the Roman arts which the Britons imitated, if, indeed, they had not acquired it before the invasion. Every thing pertaining to warfare was in those times more honoured, if possible, than at the present day; and among the Anglo-Saxons and the Britons of the early Saxon period, the chief smith was an officer of great importance, and enjoyed many privileges. In the courts of the Welsh kings he sat next to the chaplain, and was entitled to a draught of every kind of liquor brought into the hall.

Next to the weapons of war, the implements required for culti-



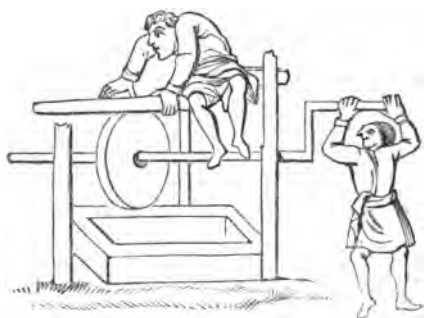
SMITH'S FORGE.

vating the soil would be the iron work most valued. The tools necessary for artificers in other metals and in wood, and knives for

\* "Anglia Sacra."

ordinary cutting purposes, were also among the articles that would necessarily be made in iron; though it is most probable the more delicate tools, such as gravers and files, were imported from the Continent, for some time after the arts they were employed in were in an advanced condition.

Whether the crude iron was imported or was smelted from the native ore during the Saxon period is uncertain; but even the heat required for the smith's work could only be produced by special contrivance, that indicated advanced knowledge in Vulcan's art. A rude drawing of a smith's forge from the Cottonian manuscripts represents its general structure to have been similar to the common



SAXON GRINDSTONE.

smith's forge of the present day. There is the open hearth to contain the fuel, with the arch over it for the escape of the smoke, and the blast of air is applied beneath.

In another representation in the same manuscripts, a smith is shown hammering a piece of red-hot iron with a hammer, and on an anvil which might have served as patterns for those now in use.

There is evidence that iron had been applied even in the construction of mills for grinding corn at the commencement of the Saxon period. Not only were mills worked by hand, but the power of wind and of water was applied to that necessary purpose; and both wind-mills and water-mills were common before the Norman invasion. The accompanying figures \* exhibit some of the implements used by the Saxon artisans, and the representation of a man grinding his sword shows that a grindstone similar to the one now in common use was then employed.

\* See Frontispiece.



The art of working in gold and silver was known in Britain at a very early period, and in the reign of Alfred the British goldsmiths had attained such perfection in working the precious metals, that they had become celebrated in all parts of Europe. Gold and silver cups, and other articles for use in gold and silver, were in great request, and certain caskets adorned with the precious metals and set with jewels, for containing the relics of saints, were especially prized. They were known on the Continent as *Anglia opera* (English works), and were carried there by pilgrims as valuable treasures. The art of gilding wood and metal was also practised in Britain in Alfred's reign. The precious metals must have been comparatively abundant in those times, for gold and silver cups and dishes are frequently mentioned as in use among the higher classes; and in the reign of King Edgar a silver table is noticed that was made by a workman named Ethelwold, and valued at £300.

The spinning of woollen yarn, and the art of weaving it into



SPINNING BY THE DISTAFF AND SPINDLE.

cloth, had made considerable progress before the Romans quitted Britain, but the cloth was of the coarsest kind. During the Saxon Heptarchy this staple manufacture of Britain was greatly improved, and it was practised not only by artificers, but formed a principal occupation of ladies, who, with distaff and spindle, would spend many hours of the day in spinning the yarn that was to be woven to form their garments. In this simple mode of spinning, which is still some-

times practised, the spindle consisted of a piece of wood shaped like a boy's spinning-top, with its upper part long and tapering to a point, to which the fibres to be spun were attached. A twisting motion was given to the spindle, and it thus twisted the wool as it was drawn from the distaff, the thickness of the thread being regulated by the finger and thumb of the spinner.

The Saxon weavers had acquired the means of making cloths of differently coloured patterns before the seventh century. This fact is incidentally mentioned by Aldhelm, the Bishop of Sherborne, in one of his homilies, in which he compares the combination of good qualities requisite to form a righteous character, to a web "that is woven by shuttles filled with threads of purple and many other colours, flying from side to side, and forming a variety of figures and patterns in different compartments with admirable art."

It was not in the spinning of wool alone that the Saxon ladies were engaged. Linen had been introduced into Britain by the Belgæ; and though it was at first considered an effeminate luxury, the use of it extended, and the spinning of flax and the weaving of linen were to some extent practised in the middle of the Saxon period. The imperfection of the manufacture of the woven fabrics was skilfully concealed by embroidery, in which the ladies of England excelled from early times, and with threads of various colours and kinds, including gold, silver, and silk, they wrought figures of men and animals, and elaborate patterns on the cloths of native manufacture, which made them rival the richest products of the looms on the Continent.

Glass was introduced into England from France in 674, by the Abbot Benedict, for the windows of the new abbey at Wearmouth, which he was erecting, and for which work he employed French masons. This abbot, says Bede, "brought over artificers skilled in the making of glass, which, till then, had been unknown in Britain, wherewith he glazed the windows of that church and monastery, and thereby taught the English the art of glass-making, which has proved so useful in making lanterns for churches and vessels for divers uses." Previous to that time all the windows had been covered either with linen cloth, or more commonly with wooden boards, placed, it may be supposed, so as to admit light and exclude rain, in the form of modern louver.

Candles made of wax are well known to have been used by King Alfred as his time-keepers, the candles having been made of such a size as to burn eight hours each. From this peculiar employment of

candles it must be inferred that they were then common articles of manufacture; and this inference is confirmed by the representation of ornamented candlesticks preserved in the Harleian MS. Lanterns of horn were also used at the same period. A drawing of a Saxon lantern in Strutt's "Chronicles of England," represents it to have been a massive structure, ornamented with metal studs.

Cabinet-making was in a rude state, though there are many attempts at ornamentation in the representations of the furniture which are



SAXON TABLES AND OTHER ARTICLES.

contained in ancient manuscripts. In the accompanying illustration of Saxon tables, taken from the Harleian MS., the legs of the one in front, with claw-feet, are elaborately carved, and in contrast with it is the plain board, mounted on squared legs, at which some person of distinction is seated. The dishes and plates, and other vessels introduced, serve to show the kind of articles that then constituted the requisites of the dinner-table. The taste for luxuries had, nevertheless, been extended among the higher classes of the Saxons, many of whom had their houses hung with silk richly embroidered; the fabric of which, at least, had been imported, for broad silk manufactures were not introduced into England until 1620. Contrasting with this display of

luxury were the wooden shoes, worn even by kings and princes, which were made entirely of wood, like the sabots of the French peasants at the present day; nor was it till after the tenth century that the improvement was introduced of making the upper parts of soft leather, the soles being still made of wood.

In the preceding review of the progress of manufactures to the end of the Saxon period, we have taken no notice of the effect of the incursions of the Danes, for that warlike people introduced no new manufactures; and though, for a time, the unsettled state of the kingdom put a stop to the arts of peace, their temporary possession of the country produced no serious injury, and after their expulsion by Alfred, the pursuits of industry were resumed with their previous activity, and continued steadily, but slowly improving until the Norman invasion.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### MANUFACTURING PROGRESS FROM THE CONQUEST TO HENRY VIII.

IN a country which is behind its neighbours in the arts of civilization, the means of progress must consist principally in the facility of intercourse with the neighbouring countries, and in the encouragement which is afforded to the cultivation of those arts among the people themselves. While the insular position of Britain checked communication with foreign parts, it at the same time afforded a haven of refuge from tyrannical persecution on the Continent; and it only required peaceable times and wise regulations of the government to supply the encouragement that was needed, to foster and improve the useful arts. During the period we are now about to consider, the first of these conditions requisite for progress was greatly improved by the frequent intercourse with France; but the constant civil and foreign wars, and the warlike passions that raged in England from the time of the Conquest to the Union of the Roses by the accession of Henry VII., prevented that advancement in manufactures which increased intercourse with foreigners would otherwise have secured. The invasion of the country by a military people, by whom the useful arts of life were regarded with contempt, and the subjection and degradation to which

the Saxons were exposed by their conquerors, tended to give a retrograde movement to English manufactures, and had it not been for the support received from the clergy—whose influence increased in those turbulent times among the princes and barons, who practically disregarded all the precepts of Christianity—they would have been reduced to a much lower condition.

The martial order enforced by William I., though extremely galling to his warlike subjects, and especially to the despised Saxons, had, nevertheless, the effect of giving confidence, in the possession of property; and in the latter years of his reign the improvements introduced by the artisans, who accompanied or immediately followed the invaders, began to be perceived in extending and perfecting the manufactures of the country. The Flemish weavers were then considered so skilful in the making of woollen cloth, that it was said of them by an ancient writer, that that peculiar gift had been bestowed on them by Nature. Many Flemings accompanied the Conqueror, and the encouragement they met with induced numerous others to come over direct from their own country. In the succeeding reigns of Henry I., and of Stephen, their trade flourished so greatly, that they amassed large sums of money, and it is stated that some of the woollen cloth manufacturers of that period rivalled princes in their wealth and luxurious style of living.

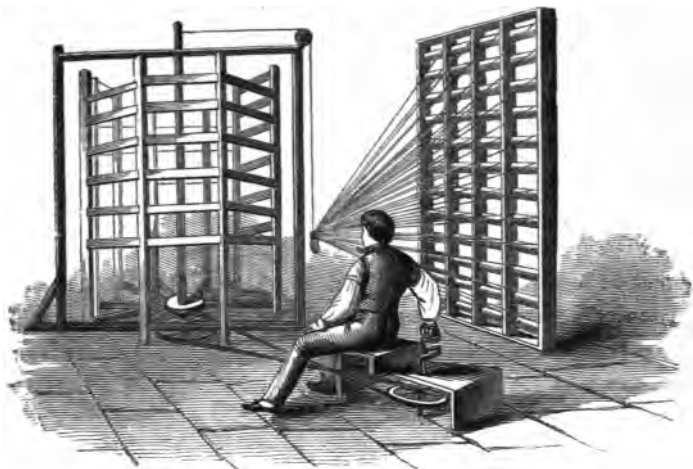
The following anecdote of William Rufus and his chamberlain, narrated in the Harleian MSS., gives an insight into the value of cloth hose at that time, and indicates that in those simple days the king's chamberlain had learned the artifice which modern London shopmen are said frequently to practice on their customers. The story runs thus:—

“One morning William Rufus, his chamberlain bringing him a new pair of hosen, he demanded what they cost. The Chamberlain answered three shillings. The king being wroth, said, ‘Away, beggar that thou art, are these meet hose for a king to wear? Bring me a pair of a mark, or thou shalt sore repent it.’ Then his chamberlain fetched another pair, much worse (for better could not be got), and said they cost a mark; wherewith King William was well pleased.”

The mark was equal in value to forty small Saxon shillings, of four pennies each, or equal to £1 17s. 9d. of our present money.

In the reign of Henry I. the art of weaving became so important in a national point of view, that guilds or corporations were established

in many of the towns where the manufacture of cloth was carried on, for the purpose of its encouragement and improvement. These special privileges were not, however, granted by Henry I. and his successors without payment; though the nominal money value of the exactions seems absurdly small in these days. The annual payment, for instance, of the city of London was £16; whilst Oxford and Winchester paid each one mark yearly into the royal exchequer.



In the reign of Henry II., a guild for the encouragement of fullers was formed at Winchester, for which they paid the comparatively large sum of £6. The foundation of such a corporation shows that the art of fulling cloth was at that time well known in England.

In the short succeeding reign of Richard I., great attention was paid to the woollen manufactures of the kingdom, and many laws were passed for the purpose of regulating the making of woollen cloth. One of these laws regulated the width, which, it was enacted must be two ells within the lists. From this it appears that the broad cloth manufacture had been already established. Its principal seat was then as now, in the West of England.

Some of the laws then passed meddled very vexatiously with the free current of manufacture. It was, for example, enacted in 1197, that no black cloth should be made and sold excepting in the cities and principal villages, and the goods of those who transgressed the law were

ordered to be seized. The city of London had, at that time, the exclusive privilege of exporting woollen cloths, and mention is made of the seizure of goods that had been attempted to be exported to Flanders, "contrary to the liberties of the city of London." Thus it appears that at that time the manufacture of woollen cloth had so far improved in England as to become an article of export to the very country where the inhabitants had the reputation of being peculiarly gifted by Nature in making it. These goods, however, were of a coarser kind than the cloths made in Flanders, and many of them, most probably, were merely sent over to be dyed and finished, in which particulars the English manufacturers were, for a long time subsequent to this period, far inferior to the Flemings; and not until the middle of the thirteenth century were cloths dyed and completely finished in England. The loom at that time generally used is represented in the accompanying woodcut. The same rude-looking machine continued to be employed till the end of the eighteenth century, and it is not yet altogether discarded.

A curious provision introduced into one of the laws passed in the reign of Richard I., shows that the clothiers had learned the effect of contrast of colours in heightening the appearance of their goods, for it was enacted, that "no merchant shall stretch before his shop a red or black cloth, or anything by which the choice of the buyers is frequently deceived in the choice of good cloths."

That the English cloth manufacturers could not compete successfully with the Flemish in the manufacture of fine cloths, is evident from a prohibitory law passed in 1261, at the solicitation of the manufacturers, forbidding the wearing of any woollen goods but those made within the kingdom, and even prohibiting the exportation of English wool to Flanders, of which great quantities were used there. The latter prohibition was founded on the notion that by withdrawing the supply of the raw material, the Flemish manufacturer would be injured. Thus we perceive that at that early period in the history of English manufacturing industry, prohibitory and restrictive laws were enacted with the view of encouraging home manufactures. That pernicious system of commercial policy was, as we shall afterwards have to notice, extended to almost every article of English manufacture. More enlightened views of the real interests of manufacturing industry have happily been taken in recent times, but we still find in certain branches of manufacture remains of the same narrow-minded policy, and claims

for protection against foreign competition are even now urged on the government.

The prohibition against wearing foreign cloth did not last long, but it was revived by Edward III., with a remarkable exception in favour of the royal family, who were to be indulged in the luxury of injuring the home manufacture by wearing the fine Flemish cloths. This exception was a strong declaration of the inferiority of the English fine cloths, and the prohibitory law, consequently, only tended to produce an effect contrary to that intended.

Though Edward III. thus prohibited his subjects from wearing foreign cloth, he encouraged the influx of foreign artisans for the purpose of improving the home manufacture. John Kemp, a celebrated woollen manufacturer of Flanders, came to this country, and was so well received by the king that numbers of his countrymen followed. Kemp settled at Kendal, in Westmoreland, with a number of dyers and fullers, and the green cloth from the factories established by him became celebrated through the country as "Kendal green."

The native manufacturers and workmen, however, were exceedingly jealous of the foreigners, and they had the madness to persecute those whose knowledge and skill afforded the surest means of enabling the British manufacturers to equal their rivals abroad. In London and in other towns the foreigners who had settled there were attacked, and were for a time compelled to abandon their factories.

In this reign the woollen manufacture spread itself over the country, but the different kinds of goods made were principally confined to separate localities; woollen fustians were made at Norwich; baizes at Sudbury; broad cloths in Kent; kerseys in Devonshire; friezes in Wales; fine cloths in Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Huntingdonshire, Sussex, and Berkshire; coarse cloths in the West Riding of Yorkshire; and serges at Colchester and at Taunton.

The dyeing of woollen cloth, though practised by the Saxons, had not progressed very rapidly in Britain; and in the middle of the thirteenth century undyed cloths continued to be worn, though the art of dyeing was carried on to some extent, and woad for that purpose was imported from abroad.

At that period the manufacture of worsted stuffs had been introduced into England by foreign workmen, who settled at Worsted, in Norfolk, from which village the name of the goods was derived, and in



1313 a patent was granted in favour of the manufacturers of stuffs who had settled in Norwich. That particular branch of woollen manufacture continued to be located in Norwich and the neighbourhood for nearly five hundred years.

In an account of the exports of British manufactures in 1354, we find 4774 pieces of cloth, of the value of 40s. per piece, and 3061 pieces of worsted stuffs, at 16s. 8d.; whilst the imports in the same year were 1831 pieces of fine cloth, at £6 the piece. It is probable that the English cloth exported was neither fulled, dyed, nor dressed. About twenty years afterwards, a law was passed prohibiting the exportation of any cloth that was not fulled; from which it would seem that, notwithstanding the encouragement given to the fullers by granting them a charter, they had not then succeeded in bringing their art to much perfection. But before the end of the period we are now considering, cloths were dyed and completely finished in England, including even scarlet, which was one of the most difficult colours to fix on wool, and the art had not been known on the Continent many years before. It was not, however, until fourteen years later, that the practice of sending cloth to the Netherlands to be dyed and finished was altogether abolished.

It is mentioned in Macpherson's "History of Commerce," that in 1383 eighteen pieces of English-made cloth, including scarlet, black, and russet, were sent as presents to certain great lords in France, from which it may be presumed that the cloths thus presented were considered at least equal to the products of Continental looms.

An absurd attempt was made by Parliament in 1489 to interfere with the current of trade by regulating prices, from which we ascertain what was considered a reasonable price for the finest English cloth then made. The price of the finest broad cloth, of scarlet or other ingrain colours, was fixed at 16s. per yard; the best quality, and plain colours, 11s.; the best hats were ordered to be sold for 1s. 8d., and the best caps for 2s. 8d. If we take into consideration that the value of money was ten times greater at that time than at present, the prices for cloth were very high. The famous Jack of Newbury was then considered the greatest clothier in England. He was the owner of 100 looms, and is said to have equipped an equal number of men-at-arms at his own cost for the Scotch wars.

The causes which influenced the progress of the great staple manufacture of England during the four centuries after the Norman

conquest, will apply equally to all other branches of manufacturing industry. The introduction of foreign artisans of different kinds extended the knowledge of their respective trades, and not only were the manufactures before carried on in this country greatly improved, but numerous new kinds were introduced and established that were previously unknown.

The metallic arts, next to the woollen manufactures, were most successfully prosecuted in England during the period under consideration. The English goldsmiths had been famous in the Saxon Heptarchy, and their fame continued undiminished. Henry II. sent a present to the Pope, consisting of two candlesticks made of silver and gold, which excited great admiration, and were said to have surpassed any work of the kind that had then been seen in Rome. At the triumphal entry of Richard II. into London in 1392, the citizens made a magnificent display of their wealth, and of the workmanship of their goldsmiths. Among other things presented to the king was a table of gold, with a representation of the Trinity upon it, worth £800, which would be equal to £10,000 of our money; and another gold table of equal value, ornamented with the figure of St. Anne, was presented to the queen.

The art of gilding was carried to great perfection, and it was fraudulently practised for the purpose of passing off as gold and silver articles made of baser metals. These frauds were carried on so extensively, that for the protection of the public, a law was passed by Henry II. to prohibit gilding altogether, with the exception of certain ornaments for churches; and it was ordered that even in such articles a small portion of the copper or latten should be left uncovered. The workmen then engaged in gilding suffered much from the fumes of the quicksilver used in the operation; and in the preceding reign the goldsmiths had obtained the royal sanction to endow an hospital for their men on that account, and because many of them "had lost their sight by the heat of fire."

The search for the philosopher's stone, which began to excite the world in the middle of the fifteenth century, gave increased impulse to the metallic arts. The alchemists were confident of the possibility of transmuting the baser metals into gold; and among the many visionary experimentalists in this country, who thought they had made the fortunate discovery, was John Cobbe, to whom a license was granted in 1444, "freely to work in metals, he having by philosophic art found out a method of transmuting imperfect metals into gold and silver." The project

having failed, Henry VII. invited a number of German miners to the country to dig for gold, but their efforts were little more successful than those of the licensed alchemists.

Coining, we have already stated, was supposed to have been known by the ancient Britons; and from the coming of the Romans into the country, it formed one of the most conspicuous arts patronized by royalty, as it afforded a direct means of adding to the revenue, by giving an increased fictitious value to the precious metals. It is not our present object to consider the character and historic value of the numerous coins that were issued during this period; but we have merely to notice the production of coin as one of the manufacturing arts.

The art of coining, as then practised in England, was of the rudest kind. We learn, from Mr. Leake's History of English Money, that the coins in 1340 were produced in this manner: the metal was cast from the melting pots into sheets, or long thin bars. These were cut with shears into square pieces of the required weights, and formed round with a hammer, by which implement also the impression was struck, by repeated blows on the die.

It may be supposed that such rude coinage could be easily imitated, especially as gilding and silvering were practised with much skill, and base coin, consequently, became very common. In the reign of Henry I. severe laws were passed to put a stop to these frauds, and no less than fifty persons who had been convicted of that offence were hanged.

All the known metals were wrought into articles of various kinds. Copper, brass, and an alloy called electrum were principally used for vessels and ornaments, whilst iron was extensively employed for all purposes requiring greater hardness. Iron works in the Forest of Dean, in Gloucestershire, which were said to have been in existence from the time of the Roman occupation, were worked very extensively, and forges were constructed in many parts of the kingdom, though they were considered such objects of importance as to be specially noted. Thus we find it stated that there were six forges in Gloucester, at the time of Edward the Confessor.

It is uncertain when coal was first used as fuel in this country; but we may presume that it would naturally be applied to that purpose in places where it came to the surface, as soon as any deficiency in the supply of wood was experienced. There is a mention of fuel dug from the earth in King Alfred's reign, but it is conjectured that that

substance was peat. The first distinct mention of coal occurs in 1254, when it was brought to London from Newcastle. In the beginning of the next century its use had become so general in London, that the King sent an order to the Lord Mayor to issue a proclamation that "no person shall presume to light fires in London or near the Tower, because the Queen was going to reside in it, and such fires are apt to corrupt and infect the air." \* The value of coal was appreciated before the beginning of the fifteenth century, for the coal trade of Newcastle had become so important in 1421, that a law was passed to secure the payment of the King's dues. The deficiency about that time of some of the kinds of wood used in manufactures was apparent by the high prices of bow-staves, and a law was passed to prevent the patten makers from using ash, from which wood arrows were made.

Though coal usually abounds where iron-stone occurs, it was not successfully applied for the smelting of iron, on account of the sulphur it contains, until the eighteenth century, and the great consumption of wood for that purpose caused several laws to be made, prohibiting the establishment of iron-works in certain districts where the scarcity of fuel began to be experienced. Thus, in 1581, an Act was passed forbidding the formation of iron-works in Surrey, Kent, and Sussex, or within twenty-two miles of London, or within fifteen miles of any part of the Thames.

The important invention of gunpowder was made known in the middle of the fourteenth century, but its employment in the art of war was for a long time limited to ordnance. The manufacture of cannon and of cannon-balls required no inconsiderable knowledge and skill in casting and working in metals, and the more so as all the cannons at first made were formed of iron. Iron cannon-balls, however, were not used in the first instance, either because the metal was considered too valuable, or because the difficulty of casting round balls had not been overcome. This is evident from an order given by Henry V. to the clerk of the works of his Ordnance for "7000 stone balls for cannon," which were made in the quarries at Maidstone.†

The reputation which the women of England had acquired for their skill in embroidery was not diminished, and their works con-

\* Rymer's "Fœdera." See p. 243, vol. i.

† Page 375, vol. i.

tinued to be in great request on the Continent. They displayed this art with peculiar care and elaboration in decorating the vestments of priests, and it is on record that the Pope expressed great admiration of some embroidered vestments of English workmanship which were



THE SPINNING-WHEEL.

sent as presents to him. The patterns of the embroidery on some hangings for the altar in the reign of Edward III. show that the taste of the age was not refined, however excellent the workmanship.

The manufacture of clocks was introduced into England by Edward III., who invited three foreign clockmakers to come over. By the end of the fourteenth century clocks were not uncommon in the monasteries and in the houses of the rich; and in the reign of Richard II. the art was brought to comparative perfection in this country.

Woollens continued to be nearly the only textile manufacture of the kingdom till a late period, for such linens as were made before the sixteenth century were of the coarsest kind. The silk manufacture was, indeed, introduced into London at the beginning of the fifteenth century by a company of foreign women, but it does not appear to have succeeded with them, for in 1455 they petitioned the

King for protection, and the importation of the articles they made was accordingly prohibited. Those articles, however, were neither numerous nor important; they consisted only of laces or ribbons and narrow fabrics. It was not till 1480 that men began to engage in the silk manufacture, which had previously been confined exclusively to women.

It is deserving of notice, as indicating the dependence of the people at that period on foreign supply for an article in which this country abounded, that salt was imported from abroad until the reign of Henry VI. That monarch invited a person who was skilled in the production of salt from brine to come over from Zealand, and he was accompanied by sixty workmen, who rendered the ample brine-springs and the rock-salt of this country available for use.

It would occupy too much space to enumerate separately the steps of progress in the useful arts during the period now under review, but the following numerous list of articles, the importation of which was prohibited for a limited time in the third year of Edward III., will serve to show how extensive was the range of English manufactures at that time. The prohibitory act was passed on the solicitation of the English workmen, who complained that their trades were injured by "the importation of foreign manufactures of inferior quality." It may be fairly assumed, however, that unless the foreign articles were either better or cheaper, there would not have been any necessity to complain of competition. The list included—

"Woollen caps, woollen cloths, corses, ribands, fringes of silk or thread, laces of thread, silk twined, silk embroidered, laces of gold, tires of silk or gold, saddles, stirrups, harness belonging to saddles, spurs, bolles of bridles, and irons, gridirons, locks, hammers, pinsors, fire-tongs, dripping-pans, dice, tennis-balls, fronts, purses, gloves, girdles, harness for girdles of iron, latten, steel, tin, or alkmine; articles made of tanned leather, tanned furs, buscones (buskins?), shoes, goloshes or corks, knives, daggers, wood-knives, bodkins, shears for tailors, scissors, razors, sheaths, playing-cards, pins, pattens, pack-needles, any pointed ware, forcers, caskets, rings of copper or of latten gilt, chafing-dishes, hanging candlesticks, chafing-bells, sacring-bells, rings for curtains, ladles, sammers, counterfeit basins, ewers, hats, brushes, cards for wool, and blanch iron, more commonly called white wire."

The following enumeration of goods exported for the King of Portugal, without paying duty, a century afterwards, affords an improved view of the state of English manufactures at that time. The list of exports comprised—

"Six silver cups, weighing six marks each, gilded; 1 piece of scarlet cloth; 1 piece of

sanguine dyed in grain; 1 piece blood colour; 2 pieces mustrevilers; 2 pieces black cloth of tyre; 1 piece white woollen cloth; 300 pieces of Essex statts for liveries; 2000 platters, dishes, saucers, pots, and other vessels of electrum; a number of beds of various kinds and sizes, with curtains, &c.; 60 rolls of worsted; 12 dozen of lances; and 26 ambling horses."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### PROGRESS OF MANUFACTURES FROM HENRY VIII. TO THE ACCESSION OF QUEEN ANNE.

THE commencement of the sixteenth century forms a marked epoch in the history of the manufacturing arts. The civil wars for the possession of the throne, which had desolated the country for years, were ended, and under the powerful governments of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth the oppression of the people by the barons was effectually suppressed, and traders and manufacturers were protected and encouraged. The persecution of the Protestants in France and in the Low Countries also tended materially to benefit the manufactures of England. Many of those Protestants who constituted the most industrious and skilful portion of the population, when driven from their native country, took shelter here, and introduced the improvements in their various arts, which had rendered French manufactures superior to the English.

This influx of foreign artisans, on which the improvement of the manufactures of the country so materially depended, continued to be viewed with great dislike by the native workmen and traders, and though the national interests were so greatly dependent on the immigration of the French and Flemish workmen, even the sovereign and the Parliament were frequently induced by the popular outcry to enact laws discouraging the settlement of those skilful artificers. The intermeddling by Parliament with the manufactures established in the country, which had been prevalent in the preceding period, continued to give a check to their progress; and as the woollen manufacture was by far the most important, it was most subjected to these injurious interferences, which not only attempted to restrict the manufacture to certain localities, but made vexatious regulations that tended to prevent the free expanse of improvement. One of the restrictions of this kind was an Act passed in the reign of Henry VIII., prohibiting all persons

living in Worcestershire, but the inhabitants of Worcester, Evesham, Droitwich, Kidderminster, and Bromsgrove, from manufacturing cloth.

In the early part of the same reign the animosity of the English workmen against the foreign artificers, who surpassed them in dexterity, industry, and frugality, rose to such a height that, being further excited by some seditious sermons and by the intrigues of a broker named Lincoln, they created a riot and broke open the prisons where some persons who had insulted foreigners were confined. The mob also attacked the house of a French manufacturer, against whom they were much exasperated, killed some of his servants, and plundered his goods. They even threatened Cardinal Wolsey, who was accused of encouraging foreign artisans, so that he was obliged to fortify his house. The women were foremost in inciting their husbands to commit these disorders, and a proclamation was issued forbidding them to meet together to babble and talk, and the men were ordered to keep their wives at home. A large body of soldiers was sent into the City to capture the offenders, many of whom were sent to the Tower, and fourteen of them, including Lincoln, were hanged. The other offenders, to the number of four hundred, were taken before the king with ropes round their necks, and having implored for mercy on their knees, they were dismissed.

The foreign artisans in London at that time must have been very great, for by an order in council of Henry VIII., fifteen thousand Flemings were ordered to quit the City at one time; and in an edict of the Star Chamber, Henry affirmed that the foreigners starved the natives, and obliged them from idleness to have recourse to theft, murder, and other enormities. To prevent the increase of foreign artisans in London, they were prohibited from having more than two foreign journeymen or apprentices.

Notwithstanding everything was done by enactments and proclamations to obstruct the improvement of the English staple manufacture, the settled state of the country and the general cultivation of the arts of peace tended to counteract this injurious interference. In 1560, upwards of 200,000 pieces of woollen cloth were sent annually to the Netherlands, and the quality is said to have been superior to the cloth made in that country.\* But assuming the fabric of the cloth to have possessed that superiority, in the arts of dyeing and finishing the

\* Macpherson's "History of Commerce."



English manufacturers were inferior to the Flemings; for fifty years after that large annual exportation had been established, an Act was passed prohibiting the sending of woollen cloths abroad to be dyed. A patent had at that time been granted to Alderman Cockayne, of London, for an invention for a supposed improvement in the art of dyeing, which it was considered desirable to encourage; but that invention not having answered expectation, the prohibition was removed, and a large quantity of cloth continued to be sent to the Netherlands to be dyed until 1667, when the arts of dyeing and finishing were skilfully practised by dyers who came to this country from the Netherlands.

The great influx of artisans from France and the Low Countries twenty years afterwards, when the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes compelled the Protestants to take refuge elsewhere from the religious persecution, materially contributed to the perfection of the woollen manufactures of England. Great as their importance had previously been, they then assumed a still higher position as the staple manufactures of the country, and as sources of national wealth.

The number of Protestants who were driven from their native country by the fury of religious bigotry, is variously estimated at from three hundred thousand to one million, a large portion of whom were eminently skilled in the arts that had hitherto given France and the Netherlands predominance in manufacturing industry over this country. Fifty thousand of the refugees are known to have settled in England, where, however, there was less encouragement afforded to them than in Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Prussia. The prosperity which Holland subsequently acquired is attributed, in a great measure, to the friendly reception given in that country to the Protestant refugee artisans from France. To those who settled in England we are indebted for improvements in various arts, including slight woollen stuffs, silk weaving, linen, paper, glass, hats, "silks called a la modes, lustrings, also brocades, sattress, black and coloured mantuas, black paduosays, ducapes, watered tabbies, black velvets, also watches, cutlery ware, clocks, jacks, locks, hardware, toys, etc." \*

The division of labour, on which the improvement of all manufactures materially depends, was carried to a considerable extent in the fabrication of woollens, even in the reign of Queen Mary, for the

\* Anderson's "History of Commerce," vol. ii. p. 569.

following classes of workmen are mentioned in an act of Parliament passed in the third year of her reign: "sorters of wool, carders, forcers, spinners and spulers of yarn, weavers, fullers, shearmen, and dyers."

In the early days of cloth-making, each weaver was the capitalist who provided the material, which was spun at his own house, and woven and sold by himself; but before the middle of the sixteenth century the trade was greatly altered, and the clothier who sold the cloth employed the various workmen then engaged in the manufacture. He delivered the wool to the weavers in quantities not exceeding twelve pounds, and when the cloth was sent back it was weighed, and if deficient more than a quarter of a pound, which was allowed for waste, the weaver was liable to be put into the pillory or the cucking-stool. The rich clothiers exercised the power of capital over the dependent weavers in a manner that called forth their complaints in the reign of William and Mary, that in many ways they oppressed them, "more by setting up and keeping in their houses odious looms, and keeping and maintaining them by journeymen; more by engrossing looms into their hands and possessions, and letting them out at such unreasonable rates, as the poor artificers are not able to maintain themselves."

The use of such machinery as was then known was discouraged not only by the workmen, but by the Parliament and by royal proclamation. Gig-mills for raising the nap on cloth, which had been introduced, were prohibited by law in the reign of Edward VI. as prejudicial to the "true draping of cloth."

The prejudice against machinery generally continued to prevail in Parliament as well as among the populace, and in 1635 an Act was passed to prohibit the use of wind saw-mills, which had been introduced by a Dutchman, "lest the labouring population should want employment."

Among other regulations enacted by Parliament, the discouragement of weaving in country places had been frequently enforced, and the number of looms allowed to be in one house was limited. Thus, in the reign of Elizabeth, the clothiers of Devon and Cornwall, where cloths of a coarse quality were made for exportation to Brittany, were allowed to have three looms in each of their houses; and in the north of England, where also coarse cloths were made, it was considered a privilege to permit the country people to have looms in their houses, the policy of the government being to confine the manufacture to towns, where the finer kinds of cloths were made.

A curious law was passed in 1666 for the encouragement of the woollen manufactures, which were then stated to have fallen into decay, by which the burial of the dead in grave-cloths made entirely of wool was rendered compulsory, a penalty of £5 being imposed on those who infringed the law. This law was not repealed until the close of the eighteenth century.

The worsted manufactures of Norwich having continued to improve and prosper, they unfortunately attracted the notice of Parliament, and several laws were passed intended for their encouragement. The importance of the manufactures of that city is thus recognized in a statute enacted in 1504:—"Norwich is an ancient city, wherein time out of mind has been used the great craft called shearmen for shearing, as well as stamins and fustians, and also all other woollen cloth." Ten years later another Act was passed relating to the Norwich manufactures, by which the dry calendering of worsted was prohibited, because it so improved the appearance of inferior fabrics as to make them look as good as those of better quality. By another Act passed in 1451, for the encouragement of the weavers of Norfolk, they were exclusively privileged to purchase the yarn spun in this country, and the exportation of it was prohibited. But what was of far more importance to the improvement of the Norwich manufactures was the arrival of several foreign artisans who had been expressly invited by the manufacturers to teach the native workmen to make some new kinds of fabrics then in request on the Continent, which afterwards became known as Norwich satins and fustians.

The art of dyeing in England, as we have before noticed, was for a long time less advanced than the manufacture of the fabric of woollen cloth. The colours then given to cloth were, however, so various, that Parliament interfered in 1552 to limit the number of the coloured cloths to "scarlet, red, crimson, murray, puke, brown, blue, black, green, yellow, orange, tawny, russet, marble grey, sadnew colour, asemer, watchett, sheep's colour, lion colour, motley or iron grey." This list of colours was added to in the reign of William and Mary, when "violet, azure, friar's grey, crane, purple, and old medley" are mentioned in an Act then passed for regulating the manufacture of woollen cloths. Not only were the colours limited in number, but the means of producing them were regulated, the use of certain materials, such as logwood and gall being prohibited. The scarlet dye from cochineal was introduced into England in 1640, shortly after the

discovery on the Continent of its valuable dyeing properties. It was brought here by a German named Drebbel, who had discovered its application accidentally, but not meeting with encouragement in his own country, he came to London, and carried on the manufacture at Bow. The superior scarlet colour thus produced was known for a long time as "Bow dye."

The foreign artisans, encouraged by manufacturers who wished to introduce novelties in their manufacture and to improve the quality of their goods, continued to be objects of great jealousy to the native workmen, and, owing to the persecutions to which they were subjected in 1665, no less than two thousand of them left the country at one time. This circumstance, combined with the Civil Wars during the reign of the Stuarts, caused great falling off in the national prosperity, and the woollen manufacturers more especially suffered. The number of pieces of white cloth exported fell from 100,000 to 10,000, without any increase in the export of the dyed and finished cloths. During the Commonwealth, the same unwise legislation which had prevailed during the previous period continued, and with the view of improving the decayed manufacture of cloth, the impolitic measures adopted of prohibiting the exportation of the raw material.

The peaceful reigns of James II. and of William and Mary tended greatly to improve the trade and commerce of the country, and the woollen manufacture participated largely in the improvement. It was estimated that, towards the end of the seventeenth century, the value of the total woollen manufactures of the kingdom amounted to £8,000,000, of which more than £2,000,000 were exported. The effect of the settlement in England of a portion of the French Protestant artisans, expelled from their own country by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, began then to appear in the improvement of our manufactures. Nevertheless, the restless desire to interfere with the natural course of manufacturing industry continued to excite the British Parliament to meddle with the distribution of the woollen manufactures, and in 1698 the House of Lords and the House of Commons presented addresses to the King, representing that the progress of the woollen manufacture in Ireland injured that trade in England, and recommending that the woollen manufacture in Ireland should be discouraged, and that the manufacture of linen should be cultivated there. It was probably owing to this interference with the course of manufacturing industry that the linen manufacture did not

flourish in England, and that it was until a recent period confined principally to Ireland and Scotland. The wearing of linen was on its introduction considered effeminate, and there is no satisfactory proof that it was made in this country until after the reign of Henry VIII., though an order given by that king to the sheriffs of Sussex and Wiltshire to buy for his use, each in his respective county, 1000 ells of fine linen,\* has been supposed to be evidence that the linen was made in those counties. On the other hand, an order issued in the same reign for sowing hemp for the expressed purpose of making nets and cordage, without any mention of linen, shows that the latter was not then considered an article of much importance. In the middle of the following century, however, the linen manufacture had been sufficiently established to attract the notice of Parliament, and an act was passed to encourage the manufacture of linen cloth and tapestry. About the same time some French Protestants settled at Ipswich, who made fine linen that sold for the enormous price of 15*s.* an ell. The manufacture of linen was then rising into importance in the north of Ireland; but the large quantity annually imported from France at the end of the seventeenth century, which amounted in value to £700,000, shows that the linen manufacture of this country had not been carried on very successfully.

The town of Manchester sprang into notice as the seat of the cotton manufactures in the middle of the seventeenth century. It had, indeed, been noted for making a class of goods called "Manchester cottons" in 1600, but the so-called cottons were only a peculiar light fabric made of wool. In Mr. Lewis Roberts's work, "The Treasure of Traffic," he thus notices the enterprising character of the manufacturers of that town in 1641, at which time it is evident cotton goods were made there:—"The town of Manchester buys the linen yarn from the Irish in great quantity, and, weaving it, returns the same in linen to Ireland to sell. Nor doth their industry rest here, for they buy cotton wool in London that comes first from Cyprus and Smyrna, and work the same into the finest vermilion, dimities, etc., which they return to London, where they are sold, and they thence not seldom are sent into such foreign parts where the first materials may be more easily had for that manufacture." At the first introduction of the cotton manufacture into Britain, and down to so late

\* Madox's "History of the Exchequer," cap. x.

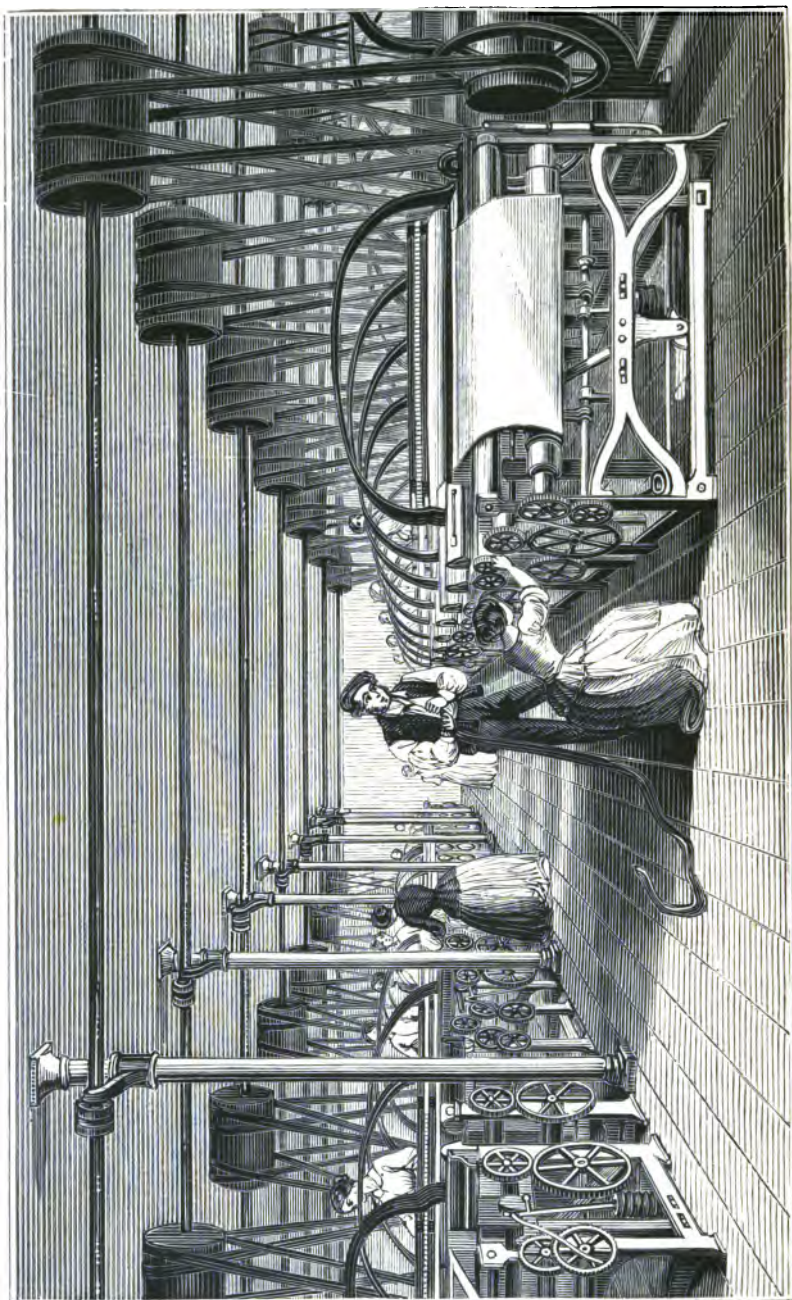
a period as 1773, the weft, or cross-threads, of the fabric only were made of cotton; the warp, which requires a stronger thread, consisted of linen yarn, which was imported from Germany and from Ireland. The printing of calicoes, in imitation of the fabrics of India, was introduced in London into 1676.

Silk fabrics were used extensively in Britain at a time when linens were comparatively unknown, and the manufacture of silk, soon after its introduction, became an object of importance. The commencement of the silk manufacture in England was noticed among the manufactures of the preceding period, but it was not until 1620 that broad silk fabrics were made in this country. In that year a foreign merchant settled in London, who was much employed by James I.; he brought over by direction of the king a number of silk-throwsters, dressers, and broad-silk-weavers, by whom the broad-silk manufacture was established in London. The silks previously manufactured consisted of laces, cords, and other narrow articles. The silk-throwsters of London had, nevertheless, become so important a body in 1560, that they were formed into a fellowship. It is stated, in a statute of Charles II., that in 1666 there were no fewer than 40,000 persons engaged in the silk trade; but this estimate is supposed to have been an exaggeration of the actual number.

The knitting of silk preceded the manufacture of the woven fabric in this country. It is stated by Dr. Howell, in his "History of the World," that "Henry VIII., that magnificent and expensive prince, wore ordinarily cloth hose, except there came from Spain by great chance a pair of silk stockings, for Spain very early abounded in silk. His son, King Edward VI., was presented with a pair of long Spanish silk stockings by his merchant, Sir Thomas Gresham." It is mentioned by others that William Ryder, an apprentice on London Bridge, having seen a pair of knit worsted stockings at the house of an Italian merchant, made a pair exactly like them, which he presented in 1564 to the Earl of Pembroke, which were the first knit stockings made in England.

In the second year of Queen Elizabeth, says Stowe, "her silk woman, Mrs. Montague, presented her with a pair of black knit silk stockings, for a new-year's gift; which, after a few days' wearing, pleased her highness so well, that she sent for Mistress Montague, and asked her where she had them, and if she could help her to any more; who answered, saying, 'I made them carefully on purpose for your Majesty, and seeing they please you so well, I will presently set more





POWER-LOOM WEAVING.

FROM BAINES'S "HISTORY OF THE COTTON MANUFACTURE."



in hand.' 'Do so,' said the Queen, 'for I like silk stockings so well, that I will not henceforth wear any more cloth hose.'"

The useful metallic arts did not make much progress during the period now under review, for as yet the smelting of iron with coal was very imperfectly known, and but little practised. A patent, granted to Lord Dudley by James II., for smelting iron with pit coal, proved of little use to the public, and nearly ruined the patentee. In 1627 a new patent was granted for the same purpose, with but little better success. Ten years later it was enacted that all iron should be surveyed for the prevention of the sale of bad iron, from which it may be assumed that a quantity of inferior quality had been made; but whether the new process of smelting by coal produced the depreciation of the iron is not stated. That process, which had proved of so little value to the inventor, was revived at the end of the seventeenth century by a Mr. Wood, who in 1700 obtained a lease of all the crown lands for making iron in thirty-nine counties, where coal and iron were found, and where there were established as stated by Mr. Macpherson, "several forges for refining and for drawing iron into bars; also a slitting-mill for rolling, slitting, and preparing iron for its various uses; furnaces for making pig-iron rails and bannisters, backs and hearths for chimneys, and all other sorts of cast iron, both with charcoal and pit coal." The native produce was then far from being sufficient to meet the demand, for we find it recorded that twenty years after Mr. Wood obtained his extensive leases, there were 20,000 tons of iron imported, the price being £12 per ton.

Birmingham had attained some importance as the seat of hardware manufactures in the middle of the sixteenth century, though the making of brass articles was not introduced there until two centuries later. Sheffield was distinguished for its special manufactures at an earlier period than Birmingham, for Chaucer, who was contemporary with Edward III., speaks in his "Miller's Tale" of the Sheffield "thwytel" (whittle), which shows that knives made at Sheffield were then common:—In 1575 the Earl of Shrewsbury, lord of the manor of Sheffield, sent to Lord Burleigh, "a case of Hallamshire whittles, being such fruites as my pore countrey affords with fame throughout the realme." A corporation for the encouragement of Sheffield cutlery was established in that town in 1624.

The art of glass making, though introduced into Britain, as already noticed, in 674, does not seem to have flourished much in this country

for a long time, and it is stated in Anderson's "History of Commerce" that it was not till 1557 that "glasses first began to be made in England. The finer sort was made in a place called Crutched Fryers, in London. The fine flint glass, little inferior to that of Venice, was first made in the Savoy House in the Strand, but the first glass plates for looking-glasses and coach windows were made about the year 1673, at Lambeth, by encouragement from the Duke of Buckingham."

The making of earthenware was still less advanced than that of glass, and does not seem to have made much progress, so far at least as regards the material, since the time of the Anglo-Saxons. In 1690 some improvements were made in the earthenware manufacture of Staffordshire by two foreigners named Ellers, who brought purer clays from Dorsetshire and Devonshire, and further improved the body of the ware by the addition of pounded flints, but it is stated by Dr. Plot, in his "Natural History of Staffordshire," published in 1786, that even then the wares were of the coarsest and commonest sort, and consisted principally of pots made for keeping butter. From that circumstance the Burslem pottery, the chief place where the manufacture was carried on, was marked in some old maps as the "Butter potteries."

Until the end of the seventeenth century there was scarcely any other kind of paper made in England but the coarse brown sort; but the war with France having occasioned the imposition of high duties on foreign paper, the French Protestant refugees and also the native paper-makers began to make white writing and printing paper.

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## CHAPTER V.

THE PERIOD OF MACHINERY.—FROM THE ACCESSION OF QUEEN ANNE  
TO THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THE History of the Progress of Manufactures in Great Britain to the period we are now about to review, has been principally a record of the gradual introduction into this country of the modes of manufacture that had been previously known and successfully practised in other parts of Europe. England was for sixteen centuries little more than

the copyist of the manufacturing skill of her neighbours on the Continent; but we have now arrived at the period when, starting from that low position, her native ingenuity and enterprise gave new directions to the labours of her artizans, and by the aid of numerous ingenious machines, by which the efforts of manual labour were vastly increased in their effects, this country has become the great workshop of the world.

The prejudice against the application of machinery as a substitute for manual labour had for a long time checked the invention and introduction of it into Great Britain, and the statute of Edward VI. against the use of mills in making cloth, and similar enactments in the reigns of other sovereigns, tended to encourage the popular prejudice against the adoption of any plan by which labour is for a time superseded. It was not until foreign importation of superior goods showed the necessity of corresponding improvements, that machinery was gradually introduced into the manufacturing establishments of this country. When machines were first imported from abroad for the purpose of establishing some new kinds of manufacture that had not previously been carried on, they met with no opposition, because there were no workmen engaged in that branch of manufacture which they threw out of work, or when machines were contrived to give additional finish to goods already made in the country, so that they might the better compete with foreign fabrics, they were not objected to. But in every other instance the introduction of machinery was opposed, and its general adoption, which has proved so advantageous to every branch of manufacture, was not effected without frequent struggles, which in many instances assumed the character of dangerous riots, in which much valuable property was destroyed.

The prejudice against machinery was perfectly natural among the workmen, who had reason to fear that they should be deprived of the means of gaining their livelihood if the machines could do their work; but it seems strange that the same prejudice should have prevailed in the minds of those who governed the affairs of the kingdom. For many years after the advantages of the introduction of machinery had been manifest, the upper classes of society participated with the workmen in their enmity to machinery, and even encouraged them in their violent attacks on factories where such machines were employed. Even at the present day, after all the experience that has been gained of the essential importance of machinery to the existence of this

country as a nation, we continue to hear the same clamour raised whenever some new contrivance is invented for the saving of labour.

The interests of the manufacturers, however, so strongly tend to encourage cheaper means of conducting their processes than by hand, that they must have been desirous to take advantage of improvements in machinery, and, notwithstanding the violent opposition to which they were subjected, they continued gradually to introduce machines in their factories. The steam-engine, which now performs more work than is done by all the manual labour of Great Britain, came into operation at the beginning of the period now under consideration; but as its efforts were at first exclusively directed to pump water from mines, which could not be done by hand, it received no opposition. It is true that the steam-engine remained but an imperfect machine until towards the end of the century, when Watt improved the steam-engine of Newcomen, and produced the wonder-working power which, more than any other human contrivance, has raised this kingdom to its eminent rank in the scale of nations.

It would be incompatible with the present work to trace the progressive improvements made in the various manufactures by the aid of machinery, from the beginning to the close of the eighteenth century. We must content ourselves with noticing the general effects which it produced in advancing towards perfection the manufactures previously established, and with describing those other branches of manufacturing industry that were brought into existence, and were successfully prosecuted by its fostering aid.

The woollen manufacture continued to be the principal staple of England, but it did not make much progress in the early part of the eighteenth century; and the arts of dyeing and finishing the cloth were still so imperfect, compared with the methods adopted in the Netherlands, that it was thought necessary to pass Acts of Parliament to prohibit cloths made in England from being sent abroad to be dyed and finished. A statute to that effect was enacted in 1709, by which a penalty of 5*s.* per piece was imposed on all persons who exported white cloth; and for the further improvement of the cloths dyed in this country, an Act was passed, twenty years afterwards, prohibiting the dyeing of black cloths without woad, indigo, and madder. Among the other Acts of Parliament relating to the woollen manufacture in this period, was one withdrawing the prohibition of the importation of the woollen yarns of Ireland; from which circumstance it may be in-

ferred that there was an increasing demand by the weavers of England for woollen yarns, which the English spinners could not supply. By the same Act of the Legislature the exportation of the woollen yarns of Ireland to foreign nations was prohibited. This demand for yarns was an incentive to inventors to contrive some other means of spinning than by the slow process of the spinning-wheel, which, though much more rapid than the old method by the distaff and spindle, was not sufficiently expeditious to supply the requirements of the many looms then at work. In Yorkshire alone the number of pieces of broad cloth made in 1780 amounted to 102,118, which contained 3,099,177 yards; and the pieces of narrow cloth manufactured in the same county were nearly equally numerous.

The comparative cheapness of wool in this country at that time was a great advantage to the clothiers, and enabled them to compete in the market with the foreign makers, the difference in the price of wool in England and France being 30 per cent. in favour of this country.\* Nevertheless the quantity of cloth exported did not increase in a proportionate degree, for in 1787 we find it stated that the total quantity of woollens exported was only an increase of one-sixth on the exports of 1700, the number of pieces being 3,610,770 against 2,932,292 in the former year. The exports of woollens from Scotland at the same time amounted to 77,024 pieces.

At the close of the eighteenth century, though the quantity of cloth manufactured was so great, there had been but little improvement in the mode of making the fabric, the process being nearly the same as it had probably been in the time of the Romans; nor did the great improvements introduced at the end of the century originate with that branch of manufacture, for the art of spinning by machinery was originally contrived for the purpose of spinning cotton. It was not, indeed, until some years after the successful application of the spinning-jenny, the spinning-frame, and the mule to spinning cotton, that those machines were applied to the spinning of woollen yarns. The further improvements consequent on the application of machinery to the woollen manufactures will be noticed more appropriately in the following chapter.

The cotton manufacture, the introduction of which into England constitutes the principal event in the history of manufactures during the seventeenth century, is known to have been established in India

\* Anderson's "History of Commerce."

five hundred years before the Christian era, and it had been practised there from an unknown period. Eighteen hundred years elapsed from the time that cotton Indian fabrics were known in Europe before the manufacture of them was introduced; and Constantinople and Italy are mentioned as the places where cotton goods were first made in this quarter of the globe. Cotton cloths were manufactured in England in the preceding century, but they were of the coarsest kind, and the web alone was of cotton; nor was the fabric made entirely of that material until after the middle of the eighteenth century. England, which now makes more cotton goods than all other countries in the world, was almost the last of the European nations in which the manufacture was successfully introduced, nor were any of the fine kinds of cotton textures made in England until after the invention of spinning by machinery.

Machinery is not essential, however, to the production of the finest



INDIAN LOOM.

cotton fabrics, for the exquisitely-fine muslins of India, which no English loom can equal, are made with yarn spun by hand and woven

in a loom of the rudest construction. Some specimens of Dacca muslin are so fine, that thirty ells of it do not weigh more than four ounces.

The extreme fineness and equality of the cotton yarns spun by the Indian women with distaff and spindle, is attributed to a remarkable sensitiveness in the touch of their fingers; but the weaving of the gossamer web, with an implement so rude as the Indian loom, can only be the effect of long-continued practice and extreme care.

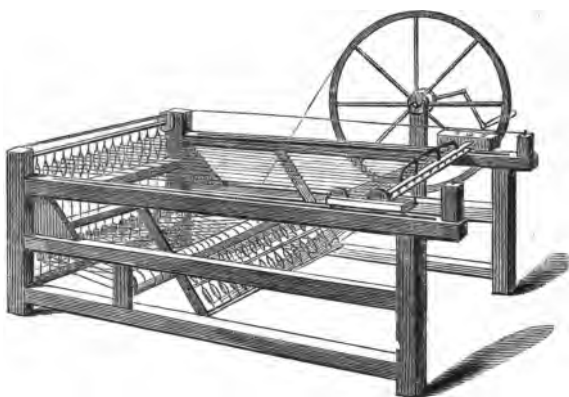
The loom with which the Indian weavers produce the fine fabric that our weavers cannot equal in delicacy, though they surpass it in regularity, is of the rudest possible construction, and consists of bamboo-canes, parts of which are supported by trees. The workman digs a hole in the ground to sit in, and spreads his muslin, as it slowly grows out of the loom, on the ground.

The first important step in the improvement of spinning was made by Lewis Paul, a foreigner resident in this country, who, in 1738, took out a patent here for spinning wool or cotton by rollers. There has been much dispute respecting the person to whom this invention was originally due, and it has been attributed, by Mr. Baines in his "History of the Cotton Manufacture," to John Wyatt, whose name appears as witness to the specification of the patent; but Paul's claim has since been satisfactorily established.\* Paul and Wyatt were partners in carrying out the invention, but they did not succeed in bringing it into practical operation.

The first piece of machinery that was actually employed in spinning was invented by James Hargreaves, a weaver living at Standhill, near Blackburn, about 1764. He is said to have conceived the idea of his invention from having seen a spinning-wheel overturned, and whilst lying on the floor the wheel and spindle continued to revolve. The spindle was thus thrown from a horizontal into an upright position, and it occurred to him that several spindles might be so placed and set in motion at the same time. He, thereupon, contrived a frame, in one part of which he placed eight cotton rovings in a row, and in another part a row of eight spindles. The rovings, when extended to the spindles, passed between two horizontal bars of wood, forming a clasp which opened and shut, somewhat like a parallel rule. When pressed together, this clasp held the threads fast. A portion of the roving being extended from the spindles to the wooden clasp, it was closed and then

\* Report of Proceedings of the British Association for 1858.

drawn along the horizontal frame from the spindles, by which means the threads were lengthened and reduced to their proper thickness. This was done by the spinner's left hand, while his right hand turned a wheel that caused the spindles to revolve rapidly, and thus gave the roving a twist and spun it into yarn. With a rudely-constructed machine of this kind, Hargreaves and his family spun web for his own loom. Not having the pecuniary means to take out a patent, he endeavoured to keep the invention secret, but a rumour soon got abroad among his neighbours that he had a machine of the kind for saving labour, and a mob broke into Hargreaves's house and destroyed it. He suffered so much persecution from the weavers, who feared the spinning-machines would deprive them of work, that he was compelled to leave his native county, and he sought refuge in Nottingham. The accompanying woodcut is a representation of Hargreaves's invention, to which he gave the name of the "spinning-jenny."\*



HARGREAVES'S SPINNING-JENNY.

A claim is preferred by Mr. Guest, in his "History of the Cotton Manufacture," in behalf of an ingenious mechanic named Highs, of Leigh, to the invention of the spinning-jenny, which is said to have been so called from his daughter *Jane*; but Highs himself made no claim to the invention of the *jenny*, though it is most probable he made several improvements in its construction. Hargreaves entered into partnership at Nottingham, in 1768, with a Mr. James, and in 1770 he

\* Baines's "History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain."



took out a patent for his invention, but his patent-right having been infringed, he adopted the hazardous course of vindicating his claim by legal process, and with the same result that too often attends an attempt to obtain justice by going to law. An association was formed against him, and not being able to contend against the united powers of a body of men, he abandoned the contest, his invention was cruelly wrested from him, and he died in a workhouse in the town of Nottingham.

The spinning-jenny, in its more perfected state, met with even more opposition from the workmen than the original rude contrivance. In 1779, a mob collected in Lancashire and scoured the country for miles round Blackburn, to destroy the jennies and all other machinery employed in the cotton manufactures. It is stated that the rioters spared the jennies that had only twenty spindles, as they were admitted to be useful; but all the larger machines were either demolished or cut down to that size. Not only the workmen, but even the middle and upper classes had the same insane dread of the machinery, and did all in their power to screen the rioters from punishment. The effects of these outrages were such as might have been anticipated. The manufacturers were driven from Blackburn to Manchester and other places, and it was a long time before cotton-spinning was revived in its original seat.

In all kinds of spinning the things to be accomplished are to draw out the loose fibres of the wool in a regular and continuous line, and after reducing the fleecy roll to the requisite tenacity, to twist it into a thread. The fibrous substance, whether wool or cotton, must, previously to the operation of spinning, be submitted to the processes of cleaning and carding, or combing, by which the fibres are straightened and bent parallel to each other. The cotton was formerly stripped off the hand-combs, called cards, in loose rolls, or "slivers," in lengths of only a few inches; by the carding-machines they are taken off in lengths of hundreds of yards. This sliver requires to be drawn out to a still greater degree of fineness before it is spun into a thread. This is done by two or more pairs of rollers placed horizontally. The sliver being introduced between the first pair of rollers is, by their rapid revolution, drawn through them and compressed. The instant it has passed through those rollers it is caught by another pair, which draw it out to the requisite degree of fineness. After passing through these the reduced sliver is attached to a spindle and fly, the rapid revolutions of which twist it into a thread, and at the same time wind it on to a bobbin. To enable the rollers to take hold of the cotton the lower

roller is grooved longitudinally, and the upper one is covered with leather.

This is the principle on which the spinning-frame of Arkwright was constructed. Cotton had been spun by rollers, as invented by Lewis Paul, several years before ; but the machines required the improvements which Arkwright's mechanical genius imparted to them, to make the invention practically useful.

Arkwright raised himself to the eminence he attained as the improver, if not as the inventor, of spinning machinery, from a very humble sphere of life. He was in his youth apprenticed to a barber at Preston, in Lancashire, where he afterwards commenced business on his own account ; and we have seen an autograph of the great cotton-spinner, indicating no great advance in the orthography and caligraphy, in the form of a bill for shaving. Having become acquainted with some process for dyeing hair, he left the occupation of barber and became a hair-dyer ; it being his practice to travel about the country to collect hair, which he dyed and sold. In 1761 he married a native of Leigh, and it is supposed that the connections he thus formed in that town brought him into communication with Highs, who was making experiments in cotton-spinning, and who afterwards was a principal witness in a trial for the purpose of invalidating Arkwright's patent. Mr. Baines, speaking of Arkwright at that period of his life, observes, "He himself manifested a strong bent for experiments in mechanics, which he is stated to have followed with so much devotedness as to have neglected his business and injured his circumstances. His natural disposition was ardent, enterprising, and stubbornly persevering ; his mind was as coarse as it was bold and active, and his manners were rough and unpleasing. In 1767 Arkwright fell in with Kay, the clockmaker, at Warrington, whom he employed to bend him some wires and turn him some pieces of brass. From this it would seem that Arkwright was then experimenting in mechanics, and it has been said that he was endeavouring to produce perpetual motion. He entered into conversation with the clockmaker, and called upon him repeatedly, and at length Kay, according to his own account, told him of Highs's scheme of spinning by rollers. Kay adds, in his evidence, that Arkwright induced him to make a model of Highs's machine, and took it away. It is certain that from this period Arkwright abandoned his former business, and devoted himself to the construction of the spinning-machine."

The result of Mr. Arkwright's inventions was the introduction of machinery by which cotton was carded, roved, and spun with great rapidity, exactness, and equality. These improvements were applied principally to the spinning of yarn, and for the warp of cotton fabrics, his spinning frame not being well adapted for the weft.

In 1775 Samuel Crompton, of Bolton, in Lancashire, invented a machine which combined the actions of the jenny and the spinning-frame, and by which yarns fitted for the warp and for the weft could be spun. This "mule," as it was called, did not come much into use until after Arkwright's patent was set aside by legal process in 1785; but it then was extensively introduced, and in a great measure superseded the original jenny. In 1792 the machine had been so far improved that 278 hanks of yarn, forming a thread 233,520 yards long, was spun from a single pound of roved cotton; but by more recent improvements as many as 1500 hanks, forming a thread of 240 miles, have been spun from the same quantity. Though Crompton's invention was so eminently advantageous to the cotton manufacture, and has contributed so materially to its improvement, he gained little by it, and after struggling against difficulties for many years, he at length obtained, in 1812, a Parliamentary reward of £5000, which was but a poor compensation for the expenses incurred in bringing the machine to perfection.

The inventions of Hargreaves, Arkwright, and Crompton gave rise to the erection of cotton-mills wherein the machinery employed could be simultaneously set in motion by the application of a motive power, such buildings having been previously quite unknown in this country. The first of the kind were erected at Nottingham by Arkwright and by Hargreaves nearly at the same time. The machinery was then driven by horses, but the inconvenience and irregularity of animal-power induced Arkwright and others after him to build their mills near falls of water. A very extensive mill, driven by water-power, was constructed at Cromford, in Derbyshire, under the immediate inspection of Arkwright himself, and not long afterwards the great success of his invention raised the *ci-devant* barber to the position of a man of wealth and title. Another cotton-mill, erected by him at Chorley, in Lancashire, was destroyed by a lawless mob.

The opposition which Arkwright had to contend against was not confined to combinations of workmen. The manufacturers combined to discourage the use of his yarn, so that he was induced to commence the

weaving of cotton. He then encountered another obstacle even more formidable than the senseless opposition of the manufacturers, by the operation of an Act of Parliament, passed "for the encouragement of the arts," by which a duty of sixpence per yard was imposed on all cloth made entirely of cotton. In 1774 this heavy duty was reduced one-half, but it was five years after Arkwright's first patent, when £12,000 had been expended, before any profit was derived from his inventions.



DRAWING-FRAME.

It was not until after the beginning of the nineteenth century that steam-power was extensively employed to drive machinery ; and before that was done mills and factories were necessarily built near streams of water, frequently in places remote from towns and difficult of access.\*

The next important improvement to which the progress of the cotton manufacture is indebted, was the invention of the power-loom, about the year 1785, of which the Rev. D. Cartwright, of Kent, has the credit of being the inventor. The abundant production of cotton-yarn by the spinning-machines of Arkwright seemed to require some corresponding power by which it could be woven ; and this desideratum

\* See the future Section upon the "History of Steam-power."

having been mentioned to Dr. Cartwright, he undertook to construct a loom for that purpose. All his first efforts, like those of most other inventors who begin to make improvements without a practical knowledge of the processes they endeavour to improve, were entirely fruitless. After the exercise of great ingenuity, and the expenditure of much time and money, he produced a rude machine for weaving cloth; and when he thought to astonish the world by his invention, he was surprised and disappointed to find that all his labour and ingenuity had been thrown away in constructing a rough piece of mechanism which was less effective and far less finished than the looms in common use. Not daunted, however, by this disappointment, he persevered until he had formed a loom that could be worked by inanimate motive-power. But he did not succeed in carrying out his invention practically, and from being a man of affluence he became impoverished by his attempts to bring the power-loom to perfection. He received some compensation by a grant from Parliament, in 1803, of £10,000 as a reward for his ingenuity.

The power-loom, indeed, worked its way to success through a long-continued series of failures. Dr. Cartwright was not the originator of the idea, for in the preceding century a loom was contrived by a Frenchman, M. de Gennes, which was described as "a new engine to make linen cloth without the help of an artificer," to be worked by water-power. Another loom for the same purpose was invented by M. Vauconson in 1765, and a factory to work those looms was afterwards erected at Manchester, but without success. Another weaving factory was erected at Knott Mills, in Manchester, in 1790, by Mr. Grimshaw, who introduced some improvements in the loom, but the factory was destroyed by fire. Similar attempts to establish power-loom factories were made in Scotland. In Glasgow Mr. Bell constructed one in 1794, which he was compelled to abandon, and in 1796 Mr. Robert Miller took out a patent for an improvement in the loom, for the working of which invention a factory was fitted up at Pollockshaws, Glasgow, in 1810, with as many as two hundred looms, but several years elapsed before the enterprise succeeded.

The great obstacle to the success of the power-loom was the requirement in the first machines of an attendant to each. This difficulty was overcome by the invention of the dressing-machine, by Radcliffe, of Stockport, with the assistance of an ingenious workman named Ross, after two years of persevering application to accomplish

it. Four patents for this invention were obtained by Radcliffe in 1803-4, but some years elapsed before the power-loom came into extensive operation. As a finale to the struggles through which the power-loom has been successfully established, we may add that Horrocks, who adapted it to the application of steam-power, and whose improved loom is used at the present time, became a ruined man.

By the invention of the power-loom, and the application of the dressing-machine, the work done under the superintendence of one man is two or three hundred times more than could be woven by the hand-loom. It is not only in the great saving of labour that the advantage of the power-loom consists, for the cloth produced by it is more even in its texture than the cloth made in the hand-loom.

The following description of the state of the cotton manufactures in 1787, given by a contemporary writer, shows its sudden development after the application of machinery, and it is interesting as an exposition of the sentiments then entertained of the great extent of that department of manufacturing industry, which has since been magnified one hundred and forty-fold:—

“British muslins were not successfully introduced until the year 1781, and were carried to no great extent until 1785, after which period the progress during two years became rapid beyond all example. The acquisition of cotton-wool of a superior quality from Demerara and the Brazils, and the improvements made in the spinning of fine yarns upon the mule-jennies, had given a spring to this branch of the cotton manufactory which extended it beyond what it was possible to have conceived. Above half a million pieces of muslins of different kinds, including shawls and handkerchiefs, were computed to be annually made in Great Britain, while the quantity not only increased daily with the new accession of powers that were bursting forth upon the country, but the quality was exceedingly improved; and since a yearly supply of about three hundred bales of East Indian cotton has been obtained, by way of Ostend, yarns have been spun and muslins have been wove equal to any from India.

“But the state of the raw materials, and the progressive and astonishing increase of this manufacture will be best explained by what follows:—

	Cotton wool used in the manufacture.	Supposed value when manufactured.
1781 .....	lbs. 5,101,920 .....	£2,000,000
1782 .....	11,206,810 .....	3,900,000
1783 .....	9,546,179 .....	3,200,000
1784 .....	11,280,238 .....	3,950,000
1785 .....	17,992,888 .....	6,000,000
1786 .....	19,151,867 .....	6,500,000
1787 .....	22,600,000 .....	7,500,000.*

In contrast with the above imports of cotton, which were then thought so enormous, it may be stated that the cotton imports, during the last year (1858), amounted to no less than 1,034,342,176 lbs., or about one hundred and forty times the quantity imported in 1787.

The application of machinery to the manufacture of linens was much behind the spinning and weaving of cotton. The flax fibre was more difficult to manage than the woolly substance of cotton, and it was not till after the commencement of the 19th century that flax was spun by machines. The improvement in the fabric of cotton cloths and muslins also tended to diminish the demand for linen; nevertheless, it continued to progress with the other improvements in the manufacturing arts, and in Scotland, where it was principally carried on, the quantity stamped for exportation in 1760, showed an increase of more than double the quantity exported twenty years before, the relative quantities being 11,774,728 and 4,600,000 yards. In the following quarter of a century the quantity stamped had increased to 19,138,000 yards per annum. Dundee was at that time, and still continues to be, the chief seat of the linen manufacture, not only of Scotland, but of Great Britain. The increase of the manufacture in that town and neighbourhood is indicated by the increase of the importation of flax from 74 tons in 1745, to 2444 tons in 1791, besides 299 tons of hemp. The whole of the linen yarn then made was spun by the wheel.

A factory for weaving fine linen was established in Winchelsea, in 1761, and it is stated, in Macpherson's "History of Commerce," that in five years the manufacture was brought to such perfection that it was little inferior to the French cambric, and sold for 13s. 6d. a yard.

The introduction into this country of the machinery for spinning silk was effected by Mr. John Lombe, in 1715, who adopted the

\* "Encyclopædia Britannica," 3rd Edition, 1799.

following artifice to become possessed of the requisite machines :—He was one of three brothers, who carried on the business of silk throwsters in London, and being anxious to obtain possession of the method practised by the Italians, who were their great rivals in the trade, he went to Italy in the disguise of a poor workman, and thus succeeded in obtaining employment in one of the Italian mills. In consideration of his supposed destitute condition, he was allowed to sleep on the premises, and he spent a great part of the night in making drawings of the machinery, which he succeeded in bringing to England. He and his brothers erected a silk-mill at Derby, in 1719, which was the first of the kind in this country. In consequence, however, of the exportation of the raw material having been prohibited from the countries where silk was cultivated, Lombe could not carry out his plans extensively, and Parliament afterwards granted him £14,000 for the service he had rendered to the country.

The interference of Parliament with the regular course of trade was, however, one of the principal causes of the backward state of the silk manufacture. It had been enacted in 1685 that the importation of foreign silks should be prohibited, and this measure, intended to foster the home manufacture, threw the torpifying influence of protection on the manufacturers, who made few efforts to rival the goods that were prevented from competing with them. The silks produced in England during the last century were, for the most part, heavy and costly, and such machinery as was employed was very inferior to that used on the Continent, even so late as 1825. Another unwise measure, passed in 1773; authorizing the Spitalfields weavers to demand a fixed rate of wages, tended to drive the silk manufacture from London, where the price of labour was thus arbitrarily enhanced, to other places where it could be obtained at a cheaper rate; and it was not until the mischief had been done that the Act was repealed.

Whilst these improvements were being effected in the machinery by which all kinds of textile fabrics were manufactured, other minds were at work investigating the properties of heat, and endeavouring to apply those properties to the improvement of the motive-power by which such machinery was to be put in motion. It would occupy far too much of our space to give even a brief outline of the successive stages of advancement by which the steam-engine was brought to a state capable of being advantageously used as a substitute for horse and water-power. All that we can attempt to do is to indicate the leading



features that distinguish the inventions of Savery, Newcomen, and Watt.\*

Passing by the vague speculations of the Marquis of Worcester, and of others who, in antecedent periods, conceived the idea of applying the expansive force of steam as a motive-power, we commence with the steam-engine of Captain Savery, as that was the first practical application of steam-power.

In Savery's engine, which was invented at the close of the seventeenth century, the condensable property of steam was combined with its expansive force to produce the power required, which was directed exclusively to the draining of mines. The engine was very simple in its construction. It consisted of a strong boiler and a strong receiving vessel, into which the steam was introduced. A stop-cock admitted the steam into the receiver, and another stop-cock admitted streams of cold water for the purpose of condensing it. From the receiver a pipe led down to the water in the mine, and was continued upwards to the top of the pit. The receiver was first filled with steam, and when the connection with the boiler was shut off, the injection-cock was opened, and the steam was instantly condensed by the streams of cold water. The pressure of the atmosphere then forced the water into the receiver, which was not placed higher than twenty-five feet above the well, to fill the vacuum caused by the condensation. The steam was again admitted into the receiver, and by its pressure on the surface of the water forced it up the pipe to the top; the return of the water into the pit being prevented by a valve. When all the water in the receiver was thus forced up the pipe, its flow downwards was also prevented by another valve, and the process of condensation was repeated.

The steam thus acted directly on the surface of the water, and a large quantity of steam was consequently wasted by condensation until the surface of the water and the sides of the receiver became heated; and to force the water to the top of deep pits required a pressure of steam that was dangerous.

Newcomen, a blacksmith, observing the waste of steam and the danger of Savery's engine, effected a great improvement in it by introducing the steam into a cylinder wherein a piston worked, to which motion was given by the pressure of the atmosphere. The steam,

\* See the Section upon the "History and Progress of Steam-power."

when admitted under the piston in the cylinder, was condensed by a jet of cold water, and a vacuum being thus produced the piston was forced downwards by atmospheric pressure. When it arrived at the bottom, the steam was again admitted, and a heavy weight fixed to the end of a beam, to the other end of which the piston-rod was attached, pulled the piston up again. This motion was continued as long as the stop-cocks connected with the boiler and with the injection pipe were turned at the proper times by the engineer; and the upward and downward motion of the beam worked pumps employed to drain the mines.

This engine was a vast improvement on the original one of Savery, who joined Newcomen, and a patent was taken out by them in 1702. The disadvantage attending the waste of steam was, however, only partially removed, for the cooling of the inner surface of the cylinder by the injection of cold water, still occasioned great waste at every stroke.

It was while repairing a working model of one of Newcomen's engines, that the idea occurred to Watt of employing a separate vessel for condensing the steam. He had been reflecting a great deal on the properties of steam, and endeavouring to contrive the means of making it more available, when, as he was walking on the Green at Glasgow, one Sunday afternoon, the idea occurred to him of a separate condenser. This improvement on Newcomen's engine, simple and obvious as it now seems, constituted the essential part of Watt's invention. The first engines he constructed were merely Newcomen's with that addition, but in the progress of improvement he dispensed with the weighted beam and introduced the steam at the top as well as at the bottom of the cylinder; the four-way stop-cocks, for turning the steam off and on, gave place to the slide-valves, which were worked automatically without requiring any attention. It was in the contrivance and arrangement of these details of the machinery that the mechanical genius of Watt was called into exercise. The original thought of the separate condenser might have occurred to any one, but the adaptation of all the parts to create the admirable self-acting engine he ultimately produced, required intellect and skill of the highest order, combined with undaunted perseverance.

It was, however, with Watt as well as with all other inventors; he had to struggle long against difficulties before he could reap any fruits from his ingenuity, and in a letter to one of his friends, at that period

of his life, he exclaimed, in the bitterness of his spirit, "What a fool I am to be an inventor!"\* When suffering from disappointment and almost desponding of success, he was about to accept an engagement in Russia as a civil engineer, and it is a matter for curious speculation what would have been the present state of manufacturing industry and of national prosperity, had Watt been driven from the country before he had completed his great work. His first patent was obtained in 1769, but it was not until the subsequent century that the steam-engine came much into use as a motive-power for driving machinery. Steam-power was applied to drive a cotton-mill for the first time in Manchester in 1789.

The improvement in the manufacture of iron, without which the improvements in machinery and the steam-engine itself, would have been of very restricted value, was in an advanced state before the middle of the eighteenth century. Lord Dudley's original plan of smelting iron with coal was successfully carried on at Colebrook Dale, and other parts of the kingdom, and the iron so made was nearly equal to that smelted with charcoal. The quantity of pig-iron made in England and Wales in 1740 amounted to 17,000 tons, which were the produce of fifty-nine forges; in ten years afterwards the annual produce was 22,000 tons; in 1788 it had been raised to 68,000 tons; and in 1796 the produce of iron from the 121 furnaces then in blast was 125,000 tons.

The more abundant production of iron introduced the use of that metal for purposes not before thought of, and before the end of the century iron bridges spanned several of the rivers in the north of England, and the roadways of some were suspended by chains.

The various metallic arts exercised in producing the "hardware manufactures," continued to depend, as most of them still do, on manual labour; but machinery was employed in all cases where a greater amount of power was required than the human hand could command; thus, the rolling of metal into sheets, the stamping from dies, and such operations, were done by machinery. The hardware manufactures were principally carried on in Birmingham and Sheffield, which rose to be towns of great importance; and the articles manufactured were so many, that the bare enumeration of them would occupy several pages. Some idea of the extent of these manufactures in metal may be

\* Muirhead's "Life of Watt."

entertained, when it is stated that in 1791 upwards of 3000 tons of wrought copper goods were exported; and the exports of brass and plated goods amounted to upwards of 2000 tons, the superiority of the British manufactures of this class being then established on the Continent. The produce of copper from the Cornish mines in 1801, was 56,611 tons, and the price was then £124 per ton. The introduction of cast steel into Sheffield in 1770, opened a fresh branch of manufacture there, and Birmingham had attained celebrity for making guns from the commencement of the eighteenth century. The making of nails by hand was carried on in the neighbourhood of the latter town to a great extent, even by females, as is shown in the following graphic account given by Hutton in his "History of Birmingham":—

"When I first approached Birmingham, in 1741, I was surprised at the prodigious number of blacksmiths' shops upon the road, and could not conceive how the country, though populous, could support so many people of the same occupation. In some of these shops I observed one or more females, stripped of their upper garments, and not overcharged with their lower, wielding the hammer with all the grace of their sex. The beauties of their face were rather eclipsed by the smut of the anvil. Struck with the novelty, I enquired whether the ladies of this country shod horses, but was answered with a smile, 'They are nailers.'"

An improvement in the manufacture of pottery was commenced in 1760, when Mr. Wedgwood established his since celebrated pottery at Etruria, in Staffordshire. Besides improving the composition of the ware, the glaze, and the colours of the kinds of earthenware before made, he invented several that were new, and introduced more tasteful patterns, which gave a high character to the English manufacture of the finest kinds of china and earthenware.

Glass also participated, but more slowly, in the general improvement in manufactures. Some attempts were made, but with indifferent success, to introduce the making of plate-glass from France. A company was incorporated for that purpose in 1773, and French workmen were employed, but it was not successful; and in 1794 another company was established.

The preparation of leather, which had been conducted extensively in this country from the earliest time for the supply of the home demand, grew into importance, and became a staple manufacture during

the period now under consideration. Of other numerous manufactures which grew up and prospered during that period, we defer speaking until we review the general state of progress at the present time.



GLASS HOUSE.

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## CHAPTER VI.

FROM 1800 TO THE PRESENT TIME.

AT the commencement of the present century all the elements existed, and were in a forward state of preparation, for giving full development to the manufacturing industry of the people, so soon as circumstances would permit; but for many years they were checked in their progress

by the continuance of exhausting wars, which drained the country of its wealth, and distracted attention from ordinary occupations. When, however, the country began to recover from the effects of war, and the people could devote themselves to the arts of peace, those elements burst forth with the vigour of a pent-up force, and the improvements in, and the extension of, manufactures proceeded with marvellous rapidity. The application of steam-power to drive the machines invented for the saving of labour doubled their effect, and by adding value to machinery gave still further stimulus to the invention of improvements in those agents. In every department of manufactures, machinery, actuated by steam-power, was employed to do the work, under the superintendence of a few men, which would otherwise have required hundreds of hands to perform; and this saving of labour so greatly reduced the cost of manufacture, that the goods thus produced could be advantageously offered for sale in all parts of the world, even where manual labour could be obtained very much cheaper than in England. This important advantage greatly increased the demand for our manufactures, and far more than compensated the substitution of machinery for manual labour; for though a less number of workmen was required to do a given amount of work, the increased quantity manufactured gave employment to more hands than were previously employed, and thus so far was the introduction of machinery from depriving the labouring population of work, that it was the means of increasing the demand.

Another effect of the improvements in machinery was, that the goods could not only be made cheaper but better than by hand; and as the English machinery was superior to that made on the Continent, the manufacturers of many goods were in the position which the foreign rival manufacturers had before occupied, and could beat them in their own markets both in quality and price. New articles of manufacture were also invented, and fresh fields were thus opened for industry, which would for ever have remained closed but for the assistance which the ingenious improvements in machinery afforded.

The numerous important improvements that were thus made, and the extension of the many branches of manufacture that was the consequence of the enterprise, skill, and industry which they developed, would require volumes to describe in a manner adequate to their value and interest, and the notice within the few pages that can be devoted to them in the present work must necessarily be the briefest possible.

All that can be attempted is to give an outline of some of the various processes by which the principal manufactures are brought to their present perfection, and to point out the state of progress which the manufacturing industry of Great Britain has now attained. In following that course we shall commence, as in the previous chapters, with woollens; for though they no longer occupy the predominant place in the manufactures of the country, they still maintain their position among the most important.

In the production of a piece of fine woollen cloth, as at present made, there are twenty-six processes, from the sorting of the wool to its completion, of which twelve are done by machinery. The first process in which machinery is employed is "willying," the object of which is to clean the wool from its impurities after it has been sorted and washed. This machine consists of a revolving cone, armed with four rows of iron spikes, and it revolves within a cylindrical casing, at the rate of from three hundred to four hundred revolutions per minute. The machine is fed by an endless apron, whereon the wool is spread, and it is carried within reach of the spikes, which tear the fibrous mass to pieces, and the wool is thus disentangled and cleaned. The "centrifugal force," as it is called, sends the fibres to the wider part of the cone, where the motion is still greater, and they are thence tossed out into a separate chamber on to another endless apron, where they are exposed to the action of a fan to drive away the dust, and the wool is laid down in a continuous fleece, which is afterwards picked and oiled. A scribbling-machine is employed for the purpose of separating and opening out the fibres of the wool, and that process is still further carried out by a carding-machine, which operates as a comb; and the wool is delivered from that machine, cleaned and finely combed, in the form of bands or "slivers," to the slubbing-machine, by which the slivers are elongated and slightly twisted, to give the fibres cohesion and strength, so as to produce a soft, weak thread. The yarn is then wound upon spindles, and it is spun in on the "billy" or "jenny." The other processes the yarn then undergoes are reeling, warping, weaving, scouring, dyeing, burling, fulling, drying, dressing or teasing, shearing, brushing, picking, drawing, marking, pressing, and lastly packing. To understand the nature of these processes it must be observed, that, after the cloth comes from the loom, it is necessary to scour it to get rid of the oil and size, which were requisite to soften and strengthen the fibre in the previous operations. After the scouring,

it is dried by stretching the cloth on upright frames or tenters, where it is fixed by hooks at the edges. When thus stretched, the "burlers" pick out all irregular threads, hairs, or dirt that may remain in the wool. The cloth is then fulling, for which purpose it is folded, and beaten with heavy hammers in the fulling-mill, where it is exposed to heat and moisture. By that process the jagged fibres of the wool are made to unite, and form a homogeneous mass, in which the separate yarns are scarcely distinguishable. Superfine cloths are subjected to four fullings, each of which operations is continued for three hours. After fulling, and the subsequent rinsing in water to extract the soap which is added during the process, the cloth is diminished about forty per cent. in width and fifty per cent. in length. In the operation of "teazling," which is effected by brushes made of teazles, the loose fibres are raised to the surface to form the nap of the cloth. Shearing becomes necessary to cut away the longer fibres, and to reduce the cloth to a uniform surface, and in the finer kinds of cloths the raising of the nap and the shearing are repeated several times. The cloth is passed between heated rollers to give it a lustre, and to prevent it from spotting by rain; and for the further improvement of the surface it is brushed when on cylinders exposed to jets of steam. Another picking takes place to remove all blemishes, the pile of the cloth is again brushed, and it is finally pressed in a hydraulic-press.

Considering the variety of operations which a piece of cloth passes through before it is finished and sent to market, it may excite surprise that it can be sold so cheaply as it is, especially when it is borne in mind that the wool of which the finer cloths are made is not the produce of this country, but is imported from Germany, Spain, and Australia, and costs as much as 3s. per lb. The great cost of fine wool has induced the application of cheaper materials for the fabric of some kinds of cloth, and, by new processes of manufacture, cotton and "shoddy," the mere refuse of the mills, are mixed with wool and woven into cloths, which look as well and feel as soft as cloth made from the finest wool. An extensive manufacture of cloths of this kind is now carried on in Yorkshire, where they are sold at as low a price as 3s. per yard.

The peculiar feature of the woollen-cloth manufacture, which distinguishes it from the manufacture of cotton, consists in the property of felting which the fibres of wool possess. They adhere together by the process of fulling so as to form a coherent mass, independent of



the woven texture. Therefore, in making woollen cloths, the yarn is loosely spun, and the requisite firmness is subsequently given to the cloth by the fulling-mill. Within the last twenty years a new kind of woollen fabric has been introduced, which depends altogether on the felting property of wool. Without being previously spun or woven, the fibres of the wool are spread out evenly, and are felted together. The felted cloths thus produced want the strength and elasticity of the woven fabrics, and they are consequently not applicable for being converted into wearing apparel, though for carpets, and for other purposes where strength and pliability are not required, they are found to answer very well, and felted cloths are now extensively used.

In consequence of the variety of processes requisite for the making and finishing of woollen cloth, more than half of which are still performed by hand, the wonderful effects of machinery are not so remarkably seen in its manufacture as in the making of cotton goods. The scutching, and carding, and spinning machinery are nearly the same for cotton as for wool; but the other processes may be conducted continuously from one machine to another, without the interference of workmen. It is customary, indeed, to make the spinning of the yarn a distinct trade from weaving, but there are some factories in Manchester where all the processes are conducted under the same roof, and in one part of the building may be seen the raw cotton emptied from the bags as imported; and it may be traced through the various operations of cleaning, carding, and spinning, until it comes from the loom in a continuous web of calico. All these operations are done by machinery with scarcely any assistance from manual labour, and the facility of the manufacture, as well as the greater cheapness of the raw material, enables the manufacturer to sell cotton goods at less than 2*d.* per yard.

Printed calicoes, whether printed at home or in India, whence they were first introduced, met with great opposition from the clothiers, as well as from the silk-weavers. The India House was attacked by them in 1680, because a large quantity of chintzes had then been imported, and Parliament was so far influenced by the popular clamour as to prohibit the importation of such goods. Twenty years afterwards this senseless prejudice against printed calicoes was carried to the length of prohibiting the wearing of them altogether, whether printed in England or imported. That enactment put a stop to the progress of calico-printing

in this country, shortly after it had been introduced, for several years ; and even when the prohibition was removed, heavy duties were imposed on printed cotton goods, which checked the use of them. It was not,

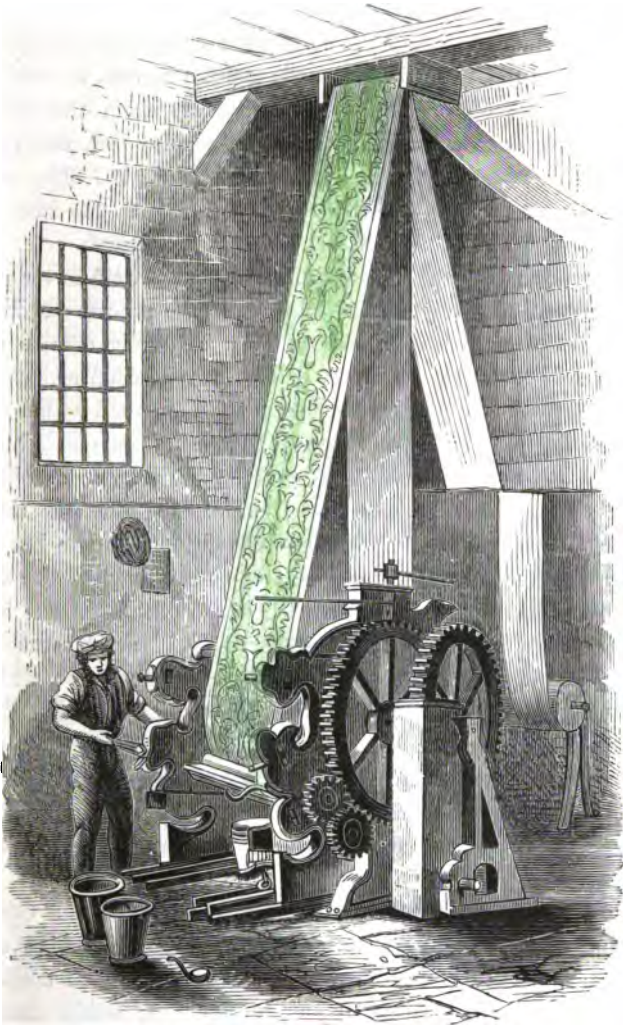


CALICO BLOCK PRINTING.

indeed, till so recently as 1831 that the duty of  $3\frac{1}{2}d.$  per square yard on printed calicoes was repealed.

Printing by machinery is one of the great improvements which, despite of fiscal regulations, so far cheapened the production of printed cottons as to extend the demand for them to all parts of the world ; and since the repeal of the restrictive duties, the manufacture has been enormously increased. The slow operation of block-printing by hand required the repeated application and adjustment of the engraved wooden block, a blow with a mallet to impress the pattern, and the supply of fresh colour after each blow, several times in printing a single yard ; but by the printing-machine the calico is passed between engraved metal rollers, fed with the proper colours from inking-troughs, and it traverses along at the rate of twenty-eight yards in a minute, printed with several colours at the same time, producing a mile of printed calico an hour. The work which is thus done in a minute by the printing-machine, under the superintendence of one man and a boy, required two hundred men and two hundred children to accomplish.

The peculiarity of flax fibre presents difficulties in the way of the application of the dressing and spinning machinery that answer so admirably for wool and cotton; but special machines have been con-



CALICO CYLINDER PRINTING.

trived for the purpose, which have, to a great extent, brought the linen manufacture under the control of machinery. It has not, however,

made corresponding progress to woollens and worsteds. Dundee is the chief seat of the linen manufacture in Great Britain; but the manufacturers in the West Riding of Yorkshire have latterly been making great advances, and Barnsley and Leeds are rivalling, in the quality and price of their goods, the best linens of Scotland. Though this branch of manufacture is not so forward compared with others in this country, it has, nevertheless, made great progress in comparison with the produce of foreign linens, as appears from the fact that, during the five months ended on the 31st of May last, the value of linen cloths, including cambric, exported was £1,737,619; and of linen threads, and small wares, £840,000; being at the rate, taken together, of upwards of £6,000,000 sterling per annum.

The progress of the silk manufacture in Great Britain in the present century is remarkably evident by the state of the exports and imports. Foreign silks were formerly, even at the beginning of this period, unquestionably superior to those made in this country, and prohibitory measures and protective duties were imposed with a view to encourage the home manufacture against the advantages which the French silk weavers possessed, from superior manufacturing skill, and from the circumstance of being able to produce the raw material. Since the removal of these restrictive measures the trade has so far improved that our manufacturers are able to export a greater amount of silks than now enter the country, and no inconsiderable part of those exports go to France. The total imports of manufactured silks, including those from India, in the last five months to which the returns were made up, amounted to 454,000 pounds' weight, of which nearly one-half consisted of ribbons; whilst the exports of fully manufactured silk goods equalled the imports, and, including the yarn and other partially manufactured articles, they more than doubled them. It is a striking illustration of the superiority of English machinery, that 340,000 lbs. of the raw material imported in the course of the five months referred to, were returned to the Continent in the form of twist and yarn, of which 220,000 lbs. were sent to France. The quantity of raw silk now annually imported amounts to not less than eleven millions of pounds, which is nearly double the quantity imported ten years ago, though there were then 33,000 persons employed in the manufacture, which was carried on in about three hundred silk factories.

The progress of manufacture of the various kinds of textile fabrics

within the last twenty years is indicated by the number of power-looms employed in each, as seen in the following table, derived from authentic sources :—

	1836.	1853.	1856.
Cotton .....	108,751	249,627	298,847
Woollen .....	2,150	8,439	14,453
Worsted.....	2,969	32,617	38,956
Silk.....	1,714	6,092	9,260
Flax .....	209	3,670	7,698
	<hr/> 115,793	<hr/> 301,455	<hr/> 369,215

An important improvement was made in figure-weaving at the beginning of the century by Jacquard, a straw-hat maker of Lyons. In plain weaving the loom consists of contrivances by which, in the first place, the threads of the warp are stretched alternately on two cross beams, called "healds," for raising one-half of the threads and depressing the other half, so as to form a space for the introduction of the weft from the shuttle, which is thrown through the opening; the weft being then forced against the web by an implement called a batten. In figure-weaving the threads of the warp are attached to several healds, by which means the weft is variously brought to the surface and thrown underneath, so as to form patterns, such as those of damask. By Jacquard's invention the movements of the healds were produced automatically by piercing the pattern in holes on thick cards, through which holes wires that regulated the rising and falling of the healds passed; and, without any effort of the weaver, the pattern was woven. Jacquard had a pension of one thousand crowns granted to him by Napoleon, but the weavers of Lyons attempted to suppress the invention by violence, and the Conseil de Prud'hommes, who have the management of industrial affairs, ordered the machine to be broken to pieces in the place of public rendezvous; and thus, in the pathetic words of Jacquard, "The iron was sold for iron, the wood for wood, and I, its inventor, was delivered up to public ignominy."

Other nations, however, adopted the invention, by which means they rivalled, and even surpassed, the products of the French looms before the Lyonnese recognized its value. More recently, the weavers of Lyons have appreciated Jacquard's merits, and as an atonement for his ill-treatment by their forefathers, they wove a portrait of him in silk, representing him at work planning his apparatus. This elaborate piece

of workmanship, intended as "hommage" to Jacquard, required 24,000 cards to form the pattern, each card being pierced with upwards of a thousand holes.

The hosiery and the lace manufactures have recently become important branches of industry, in consequence of improvements in the machinery by which they are produced, and the further saving of labour by the application of steam-power.

The progress of the stocking manufacture presents another example, worth noting, of the struggles and disappointments through which most of our improvements in the manufacturing arts have been established. Not many years after the first pair of silk stockings had been made for Queen Elizabeth by her silk-woman, the stocking-frame was invented by William Lee, a Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge. Lee having married, contrary to the statutes of the college, was expelled from the university, and being thus deprived of his former means of support, he was obliged to depend for his livelihood on the skill of his wife in knitting stockings. When noticing her at that occupation, it occurred to him that the work might be much quicker done by mechanical means. He at once set about contriving a machine to effect that object, and, having succeeded, he carried out his invention first at a village near Nottingham, and afterwards in London. It is stated that he obtained the notice of Queen Elizabeth, and that she visited him to see his stocking-frame at work, but being angry because he was making worsted stockings instead of silk, she refused to grant him either money or a patent for his invention, on the ground that it would deprive the poor of employment. Notwithstanding this expression of the queen's displeasure, Lee constructed nine frames, which were worked by apprentices. He was induced by offers from Sully, the French ambassador, to remove with his machines to France, where he first established himself at Rouen, and afterwards at Paris, and he was proceeding prosperously, till the public commotions, after the murder of the king, destroyed his prospects, and being proscribed as a Protestant, he was compelled to secrete himself, and he died in great poverty in Paris. All his workmen, with the exception of two, returned to London, where they prosecuted the manufacture so assiduously that the frame-work knitters soon became a numerous body.

The manufacture of lace is associated with that of hosiery, not only by similarity of the machinery for its production, but by the localities in which they are carried on; Nottingham and Leicester being the

principal seats of both manufactures. In no branch of manufacture are the productive powers of machinery more conspicuous than in the making of lace. Lace-making by hand is one of the most tedious of processes, and the women, who seem to be busily at work, produce but a few inches of narrow lace in the course of an hour. The cost of the hand-made article is proportionately high, and veils of Honiton lace have been known to sell for one hundred guineas each. By the bobbin-net machine, which was invented in 1809, aided by Jacquard's apparatus, a veil of equal size and nearly equal in the beauty of its workmanship, may be produced for about as many pence. This machine came into general use in 1824, and the rapidity of its action gave great stimulus to the trade. The power of production by the bobbin-net machine, as compared with hand-made lace, is estimated to be about 6000 to 1.

The leather manufactures have always been of great importance in this country, and though they may not occupy so high a relative position as they formerly did, when leather was more employed as a material for wearing apparel, they are still estimated to be the fourth in importance among the manufactures of Great Britain.\* The number of workmen occupied in the preparation and manufacture of leather was estimated, eight years ago, to amount to a quarter of a million, and the total value of the manufactures was computed to be fourteen millions sterling, one-half of the articles made being boots and shoes. By recent applications of chemistry, the process of tanning has been so greatly expedited, that leather, which formerly occupied eighteen months and upwards in its preparation, can now be tanned in a few weeks; but the latter kind is considered less durable than that which has occupied longer time in the process. The annual imports of hides and tanned leather amount to about 25,000 tons, and greatly exceed the export of unwrought leather, which amounts to only 400 tons. The declared value of the exports of wrought leather articles is about £1,400,000. The principal article of leather manufacture imported is gloves, of which not fewer than 2,109,527 pairs were imported in the course of five months.

Of the articles of manufacture to which machinery has been applied with wonderful effects in facilitating production, paper is one of the most-remarkable. As in the process of making calico the raw material

\* M'Culloch's "Statistical Account of the British Empire."

may be seen at one part of the factory converted into a fine woven fabric at another part; so in the paper-making machine, dirty calico rags are placed at one end, and are reproduced at the other in a continuous web of beautifully white paper, and, if it suited the convenience of trade to combine the occupations of paper-maker and printer, the paper might be transferred, without any interference by the hands of workmen, from the paper cylinder to the cylinder of the printing-machine, and the rags might be seen undergoing the various stages of progression until presented in the form of printed sheets of paper. By means of the paper-making machine 10,450 square yards of paper can be made in twelve hours, and there are upwards of three hundred machines at work in this country.\* The great demand for paper, consequent on the increased facility of making it, and on the rapid action of printing-machines, having caused a dearth of the ordinary materials for making it, new substances have been put in requisition, among which straw has been rendered serviceable for the purpose, and large quantities of straw-paper are now manufactured.

In the progress of the application of machinery to facilitate manufactures, the making of machines has become an important branch of national industry. The advantages which Great Britain possesses in her stores of coal and iron, have placed this country far in advance of all others in making steam-engines and other large machines, and many political economists still doubt the expediency of allowing foreigners to participate in those national privileges, and thus to compete with our manufacturers. If, indeed, there were any probability of our beds of coal becoming exhausted, there might be good foundation for those doubts as regards that produce; but, happily, the stores of mineral fuel are so abundant that no danger need be apprehended on that account, and the advantages of free trade are now so well understood, that the exportation of machinery is no longer prohibited. The annual value of the machinery exported amounted, in 1842, to only half a million; in 1850, it was one million; and, during the last three years, the annual value has increased to upwards of two millions sterling.

The following abstract from the Trade and Navigation Accounts presented to Parliament in June last, showing the comparative declared values of some of the principal articles of manufactures of the United Kingdom during the corresponding five months of the last three years,

\* "Great Facts," page 223.







BRISTOL QUAY.

will give some idea of the importance those manufactures have now attained, and of their continued progress:—

## EXPORTS DURING THE FIVE MONTHS ENDED MAY 31.

	1857.	1858.	1859.
Cottons (woven) .....	£12,159,626	£12,081,206	£15,044,224
„ (yarn) .....	3,346,741	3,748,914	3,718,598
„ (lace and net) .....	187,741	151,032	178,733
„ (thread for sewing) .....	218,236	172,975	269,372
Earthenware and porcelain .....	685,416	461,819	523,848
Glass .....	268,633	239,209	240,856
Haberdashery and millinery ...	1,703,485	1,265,907	1,760,770
Hardware and cutlery .....	1,566,634	1,220,625	1,510,675
Leather, manufactured .....	784,220	628,948	584,232
Linens (woven) .....	1,806,016	1,444,060	1,737,619
„ (yarn) .....	702,330	613,576	704,696
Steam-engines .....	404,493	546,980	284,397
Machinery .....	924,222	904,449	941,478
Railway iron .....	1,750,756	1,320,852	1,716,109
Wrought iron of other kinds ...	1,404,300	1,060,181	1,280,040
Copper sheets and nails .....	684,698	617,051	555,159
„ plates .....	654,541	505,621	717,589
Plated wares, plate, and jewellery	209,726	185,075	201,578
Silks (woven) .....	344,694	213,046	318,907
„ (other kinds) .....	218,289	111,155	141,093
„ (twists) .....	573,796	204,756	307,070
Woollens (woven) .....	2,817,855	2,069,559	2,829,699
Worsted stuffs .....	1,399,750	1,087,774	1,804,406
Woollen and worsted yarns .....	1,069,710	861,146	999,005

The total declared value of all articles exported during the first five months of 1859 was £52,337,268; according to which returns, therefore, the annual exports of the produce of the United Kingdom amount, at the present time, to upwards of one hundred and twenty-five millions sterling.

Of the other manufactures that have advanced in their progress, and have sprung into existence during the present century, we have only space to make a brief mention.

The metallic arts, in every branch, have been advancing with rapid strides. The great production of iron has been already noticed, to which the invention of steam locomotion on railways and the application of steam-power in navigation, have given accelerated impulse. The articles in copper, brass, steel, and tin have increased enormously in variety and in the quantity manufactured, the amount exported, as

stated in the foregoing table, giving but a very imperfect notion of the extent of those manufactures, whilst in the finer metallic arts the recent invention of electro-plating has introduced a new kind of beautiful and useful workmanship, that has already assumed importance among the products of national industry. Many other branches of manufacture that have been created within this century, though not noticed in the Parliamentary returns, occupying thousands of workmen, are carried on by means of special machinery, and many millions sterling are invested in their development.

Among the articles which have been brought into common use within the last fifty years, may be mentioned umbrellas and parasols, for, though not unknown in the last century, they were rarely adopted. The ladies screened their faces from the sun with large green fans, and gentlemen who ventured to protect themselves from the rain with umbrellas were hooted after as effeminate. The vast number of these articles now made for home use and exportation must form a considerable item in the manufactures of the kingdom, and some of the London houses sell as many as five hundred dozen of umbrellas in a week.\*

Metallic pens are now in universal use, without, however, having materially reduced the price of quills; for the introduction of penny postage has so greatly increased the number of letters written, that were it not for the invention of metallic pens, it is difficult to conceive how the implements for writing would have been provided. The quantity of steel pens made in the course of a year it is almost impossible to estimate, but one manufacturer of them alone employs 500 hands.†

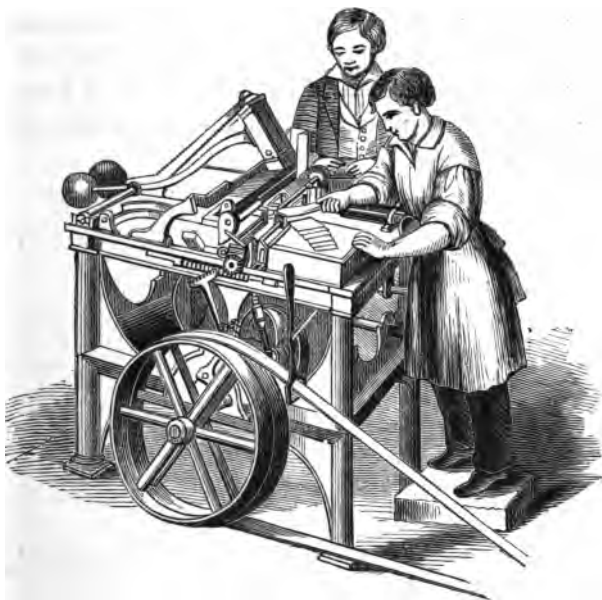
The introduction of gutta-percha and the process of vulcanizing India rubber have given rise to manufactures that were, until recently, entirely unknown. The use of the latter substance was so limited in 1830, that the total quantity of caoutchouc imported did not exceed 50,000 lbs. In 1842, the quantity had increased to 700,000, and the present annual importation amounts to 2,000,000 pounds. Gutta-percha was commercially unknown till 1843, and two years afterwards not more than 20,000 lbs. of that substance were imported in the year; but the use of it extended so rapidly, that the annual importation had increased, in 1848, to 3,000,000 pounds, and though

\* "Jury Reports of the Great Exhibition, 1851."

† Ibid.

not specifically mentioned in the returns, we may estimate the consumption of gutta-percha to have doubled during the last ten years.

Of the new kinds of manufacture of articles in general use, may be mentioned envelopes, of which it is estimated that not less than five millions a-day are employed. Machines have been constructed for folding and gumming these convenient coverings for notes and letters, which will make as many as 2700 in an hour, the greatest number that can be folded in a day by hand being 3000.



ENVELOPE FOLDER.

The manufacture of moderator, candle, and of other lamps, of gas meters, and gas-fittings, of photographic apparatus, of works in papier-maché, and of tons upon tons of lucifer matches, constitute some of the many minor articles which an advanced state of civilization and luxury has been the means of creating.

The preceding sketch of the progress of manufactures in this kingdom, from the time of the Romans to the present day, exhibits, in almost every page, the struggles and difficulties by which each step in advance has been made. So soon as any one of the arts had attained sufficient importance to attract the attention of the sovereign

or of the legislature, it was either hampered by taxation, restricted by vexatious regulations, or subjected to the still more deadening influence of unwise prohibitive duties on foreign goods, imposed with the view of encouraging and improving the home manufacture. Nor were the prejudices against the introduction of machinery for the saving of labour less obstructive to the progress of improvement than the measures of the Government. But, by the persevering efforts, the assiduous industry, the ingenious skill, and the undaunted enterprise of the people, all those discouragements and difficulties have been triumphantly overcome; and they have succeeded in gradually raising this country from the lowest state of savage barbarism to be the first in importance, the first in wealth, the most extensive in dominion, and, we may add, second to none in intelligence and moral virtue, of all the nations of the earth.

# THE PROGRESS OF COMMERCE.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE BRITISH, ROMAN, AND SAXON PERIODS.



AVING in the preceding section traced the Manufactures of this country, from their dawn to their present state of development, we shall now proceed to notice the progress of Commerce, with which manufactures are closely associated. Commerce is, indeed, so intimately connected with manufactures that the one could scarcely exist without the other. Even in the rudest state

of society there must be an interchange of commodities among the people of the same tribe, for the hunters and fishers would be glad to part with their superabundant food for vegetable produce, or in exchange for such articles of wearing apparel as the ingenuity and fancy and industry of other members of the tribe contrived to put together. Thus commerce would spring up to accommodate their mutual wants, and, as those wants increased with the progress of civilization and the secure enjoyment of property, manufactures would multiply, and their interchange for raw produce or for articles of a different kind would become more frequent. This kind of traffic

among people of the same tribe would extend as soon as peaceful intercourse with neighbouring people was established; and that intercourse would be promoted by the supply of their mutual wants. Thus commerce and amity go hand in hand together, the supply of mutual wants being the foundation of friendship, and the establishment of peaceful relations giving a stimulus to manufacturing industry, whereby commerce is extended. It has been well observed by a contemporary writer:—

“In most ages of mankind the destinies of states have depended on the tracks of commerce. Cities have been made and unmade, and kingdoms elevated or depressed, by simple and silent changes in the course of trade. The mighty ruins in Asiatic plains mean often nothing more than that the adoption of some new route by a line of caravans left a proud and stately emporium stranded and desolate. The ancient ports in the basin of the Mediterranean, whose historical names arrest every traveller’s attention, have become what they are because commercial revolutions took away their shipping, and, with their shipping, their vitality. Venice, Lisbon, and Amsterdam have felt, in later days, the ebb of trade, while its flow has been sufficient, as we see, to create in San Francisco, Singapore, and Melbourne such interests as in former days could never have been conceived. There was once a time when the critical region of the world was India, and when upon the communications between that country and Europe the fortunes of intermediate states seemed apparently to turn. But India has now been compelled, if not to relinquish, at least to divide her pre-eminence. There is another region with more important commerce, though a less romantic history. Instead of the diamonds of Golconda and the silks of Bengal, we see the bread-stuffs of Ohio and Michigan absorbing the expectations of Europe. The West is eclipsing the East—all the more so because it is new, limitless, and inexhaustible.”

It is a remarkable fact that the first record of traffic between people of different countries is found in the narrative, in the Book of Genesis, of the sale of Joseph by his brethren to the Ishmaelites:—“And they lifted up their eyes and looked, and behold a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels, bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.”

The narrative of this event, which occurred 1070 years before the Christian era, shows not only that trade was then established between



Arabia and Egypt, but that the Arabians must have had commercial intercourse with India, whence they had derived the spices they were carrying to Egypt; for "the spicy groves of Araby the blest" have no existence but in the fertile imagination of poets.

Though the interchange of the commodities of neighbouring countries by land carriage constitutes "commerce" in the strict meaning of the term, yet the signification has been restricted in this insular country to produce and manufactures of different countries that are imported or exported in ships, and in that limited meaning of commercial transactions the Phœnicians were the first who "went down to the sea in great ships," for the purpose of bringing back the produce of distant countries in the west of Europe, in exchange for the produce and manufactures of the East. Those adventurous mariners, who passed through the straits of Gibraltar into the vast Atlantic 1100 years before the invasion of Britain by Julius Cæsar, having settled themselves and established commercial relations in Spain and Gaul, at length reached the south-west coast of this island. They were not slow in discovering the mineral treasures of Cornwall, which were the more valuable to them because they had nearly exhausted the tin mines of Spain, whence they had previously obtained their supply of that metal, and tin was of great importance for the manufacture of bronze at a time when iron was scarcely known.

It was to this island that nearly the whole of Europe was indebted for tin to make bronze, by mixture with copper obtained elsewhere; but the copper which abounds in Cornwall was either unknown or neglected. The other mineral produce spoken of as exported by the Phœnicians was lead; but if that metal were exported in any quantity, it must have been considered greatly inferior in value to the tin. The Phœnicians attached so much importance to the discovery of the "tin islands," that they carefully concealed from the rest of the trading world the place whence they obtained that metal, and they continued to keep the secret for upwards of 300 years. It has been already mentioned\* that when one of their trading vessels was followed by a Roman ship for the purpose of finding out whence the tin was brought, the Phœnician captain purposely ran his vessel among the shallows, where the Roman ship followed him and was wrecked.

The exact time when the trade with Britain was opened by the

\* "Progress of Navigation," page 274.

Phœnicians is not known. Some authors fix it at 900 years before the Christian era, whilst others bring it down to a period 800 years later; but it is certain that after the metallic treasures of this island were discovered there was no cessation in the traffic with the natives.

The source whence the tin was derived was afterwards discovered by the Greeks, and Herodotus, who wrote about 440 B.C., says that it was known to come from Britain, though he was ignorant of the situation of the island. Pythias, an adventurous Greek sailor, who made a voyage of discovery about 330 B.C., reached as far as Ireland, and described also the position of the tin islands, and it is probable that the colony of Greeks at Marseilles traded with Britain soon afterwards. The source of the traffic in tin, and the method of preparing the metal, were, indeed, so well known a hundred years after the voyage of Pythias, that Polybius, who lived two hundred years before the Christian era, wrote a book, which has been unfortunately lost, respecting the island of Britain and the manner in which tin was managed.

Besides tin and lead, the Phœnicians are stated to have taken away the skins of animals, and for these articles they gave to the natives in barter earthenware, salt, and bronze articles of various kinds for use and ornament. It may be presumed that the Britons of those days fared no better in bartering with foreign merchants than the savage tribes of modern times fare in their bargains with the traders who have intercourse with them. We do not learn, however, that the Phœnicians were guilty of introducing among the natives intoxicating drinks, as was the shameful practice in modern times in dealing with the Indians of North America. Money was, of course, unknown in Britain at that period, and the intrinsic value of the articles taken in exchange, as estimated by the time and labour required for their manufacture, would be little understood by men ignorant how they were made and in what manner procured. Solinus, a Roman author, thus speaks of the Silures, a distinguished tribe of Britons who inhabited the counties bordering on South Wales:—"They make no use of money in commerce, but exchange one thing for another, and in making these exchanges they pay a greater regard to the mutual necessities of the parties than to the intrinsic value of the commodities." In this state of things, he observes, no persons were traders by profession, and, being ignorant

of the arts of numbering, weighing, and measuring, and unacquainted with the use of money, they acted only by guess.

When the situation of Britain became more generally known, the trade continued to be limited by the difficulties of navigation, and, at length, the Greek traders of Marseilles established a communication by land-carriage across Gaul. It has been supposed, from the accounts given by ancient writers, that the natives of Cornwall, in trafficking with the Phœnicians, conveyed the tin to the Isle of Wight, and shipped it from some port in that island, which was represented to be accessible from the mainland at low water. It is, however, very improbable that they should have carried the metal a distance of 200 miles along the coast, past many more convenient harbours, to the Isle of Wight; and there can be little doubt that the island called *Ictis*, was one of the Scilly isles, close to the coast, where there was a convenient harbour.

When the Romans occupied Britain the commerce must have rapidly increased, for they would necessarily require to be supplied with the manufactures and foreign produce to which they had been accustomed, among which were wine, spices, furniture, and clothing. In return for those commodities the resources of Britain must have been tasked to the utmost to supply the equivalent. Corn was one of the chief articles exported to the Continent in return for the imported foreign articles, and among the things which the island then produced that were in request abroad were, pearls, "jeatstone," lime, chalk, horses, cattle, and dogs. The British horses and dogs were much prized by the Romans, the kind of dogs exported being mastiffs, bull-dogs, and hounds. Strabo also mentions slaves as exports from Britain.

Though pearls are now rarely found off the sea-coast of this island they were then abundant, and many of those found were of large size and of pure quality. Some historians, indeed, mention the pearls then obtained here as having been the temptation to the Romans to invade Britain. A valuable collection of pearls procured from the estuary of the Conway was in the possession of Mr. Wynn, and one of the pearls found in that river was presented to the Queen of Charles II., and is said to be still an ornament of the English crown. The pearl fishery was, indeed, carried on in Perthshire so recently as the middle of the eighteenth century. The jet, which was much esteemed, was imagined by the ancients to possess curative and magical properties.

The Romans, according to their custom with conquered provinces, levied a tribute on the people of Britain, but there is no evidence of its having been paid directly. From the insular position of the country, however, the Roman governors were enabled to collect the tribute in the form of port dues, called "portaria," on all goods imported and exported. Those duties, during the most flourishing period of the Roman rule in Britain, are stated to have amounted to as much as £500,000 in one year, which was one-fourth part of the whole revenue of the country. The ports through which the trade with the Continent was then carried on were situated on the mouths of the Rhine, the Seine, the Loire, and the Garonne.

The whole course of commerce underwent a complete change on the advent of the Romans, who substituted coin as the representative of value for the system of barter. Trading became a separate occupation, in which numerous persons were engaged, and, notwithstanding the exaction of heavy duties, it prospered under all difficulties, and the traders acquired wealth and importance. London was a place of great consideration in the time of Nero, one hundred years after Cæsar's invasion; and Tacitus, who lived some time in London, fifty years after that period, speaks of it as "famous for its many merchants and the plenty of its merchandise." The principal portion of the buildings, however, were to the east of Ludgate Hill, and even in the year 982, when London was consumed by fire, there were very few houses beyond that boundary. London does not appear to have then exceeded, if it equalled, in size the cities of Canterbury and York.

Under the Roman dominion a large fleet of British ships was built and manned to repel the attacks of the Danish pirates, and there can be little doubt that many of those ships were employed in conveying goods from one part of the island to another, if they were not engaged in foreign trade; but little is positively known of the manner in which commerce was then conducted. The Romans thought only of making the natives they had subdued subservient to their uses, and to the maintenance of their military power; but some of the measures they adopted for that special object tended materially to facilitate the means of intercourse and to improve agriculture. The excellent military roads they constructed served more usefully for general internal intercourse, and in the anxiety to provide corn for the army on the Continent as well as in this island, superabundant supplies of food were raised. England served as the granary for the

imperial armies in the north of Europe, and it is stated by the historian Sossinus, that, in 395 A.D., the Roman colonies on the Upper Rhine having been plundered by the enemy, the Emperor Julian built a fleet of eight hundred ships, larger than usual, to send to Britain for supplies of corn, and that the quantity taken over was amply sufficient to supply the wants of the people.

The continual inroads of various warlike tribes after the departure of the Romans; the ravages on all kinds of property, and the consequent insecurity arising from the almost incessant wars, gave a complete check to the progress of commerce for upwards of three hundred years, nor was it until Offa, the King of Mercia, had succeeded, by force and treachery, in establishing comparative tranquillity, that commerce again reared its head. It appears, however, that traffic had been covertly carried on with the Continent, under the cloak of religion, in those articles of jewellery and works in the precious metals in which the Saxon goldsmiths excelled. Persons in the disguise of pilgrims had conveyed those works to Rome, and thus evaded the payment of the duties imposed on their transit through France. Charlemagne complained to Offa of this practice, and a breach of intercourse ensued for some time, during which an embargo was laid on the ships of each country. This breach was healed by a treaty, in the form of a letter from the great monarch to the petty sovereign; and it is worth quoting, as being the first of the many commercial treaties that this country has entered into with foreign states. After some preliminary observations, the letter runs thus:—

“Charles, by the grace of God, King of the Franks and Lombards, and patrician of the Romans, to our venerable and most dear brother, Offa, King of the Mercians, greeting. First, we give thanks to Almighty God for the sincere Catholic faith which we see so laudably expressed in your letters. Concerning the strangers, who, for the love of God and the salvation of their souls, wish to repair to the thresholds of the blessed apostles, let them travel in peace without any trouble; nevertheless, if any one be found among them, not in the service of religion, but in the pursuit of gain, let them pay the established duties at the proper places. We also will that merchants shall have lawful protection in our kingdom, according to our command; and if they are in any place unjustly aggrieved, let them apply to us or our judges, and we shall take care that ample justice be done to them.”

The letter concluded by telling Offa that the Emperor had sent him a present of a belt, a Hunnish sword, and two robes of silk.

During the Heptarchy there was no intercourse between the Anglo-Saxons and the Welsh. The ancient Britons, who inhabited that portion of the island, considered themselves the rightful owners of the land, and robbery of the Saxon possessors was not only regarded by them as justifiable but laudable. Nor was there much more commercial intercourse between the Saxons themselves, for the separate kingdoms were frequently at war with each other. Even the trading transactions of the subjects of the same king were so restricted by vexatious regulations, that the purchase of the common necessities of life could not be made without legal formalities. Lothair, the King of Kent, made a law, in the seventh century, forbidding the purchase of anything in the city of London without the presence of two or three honest men or of the king's portreeve, on pain of forfeiture of the goods. The purchase of any article above the value of twenty pence was prohibited, excepting in a town, and then the transaction was ordered to be in the presence of witnesses. The restrictions on bartering were still more stringent, for in such transactions the presence either of the sheriff, of "the mass priest," the lord of the manor, or of some other person of undoubted veracity, was required, and a penalty of thirty shillings was inflicted, together with the forfeiture of the goods to the lord of the manor, for any known breach of the law.

These regulations, though made ostensibly for the prevention of imposition, were most probably intended as security for the payment of the duties imposed on all purchases and sales. Nothing above a certain value was bought or sold without levying a duty on the goods; and in the reign of Edward the Confessor the restrictions on commercial dealings are stated to have been carried to such an extent, that the clergy levied their tenths on the profits of trade. The Welsh laws interfered still more minutely in buying and selling, the price of every article being fixed by law, from a king down to a cat's tail. So ridiculously particular were the Welsh laws in fixing the prices of all articles, that they specified with great minuteness even the price of cats at different ages, from birth to decrepitude.

The regulations for the sale of goods, in the presence of witnesses, were adopted by the Britons, and afterwards by the Saxons, from the Romans, and they were continued with equal strictness after the Conquest, as is evident from several entries in "Domesday Book." From

one of these it appears that a certain proportion of the price of everything bought and sold in the borough of Lewes was to be paid to the portreeve, the buyer and seller each paying one-half of the tax. The amount of the tax to be paid on the sale of a slave was fixed at four pennies, without reference to the price obtained; the sale of slaves being then, and for a long time afterwards, recognized by law.

The establishment of markets and fairs tended in those times to counteract the prejudicial effects of the restraints on trade which the regulations we have noticed imposed. The markets were a great convenience to persons living at a distance from towns, and for their accommodation they were fixed, in the first instance, on Sundays, and were held close to the churches, so that those who came from a distance to discharge their religious duties might at the same time purchase the articles they should want during the week. This mingling of religious with secular affairs was not, however, found compatible with the interests of religion; therefore the priests exerted their influence to have the market days changed; and they succeeded in having Saturday substituted for Sunday. To suit the convenience of the country people, the fairs also were fixed on days when they were accustomed to visit the towns to celebrate the festivals of their patron saints. At each of these markets and fairs persons were appointed by the lord of the manor to superintend the sales and to collect the duties levied on them.

The blending of the separate states of the Heptarchy into one monarchy was very beneficial to trade, as it put an end to the internal commotions that were continually distracting attention from the arts of peace and destroying confidence in the possession of property. It had the effect, also, of giving greater importance to the kingdom in the estimation of foreigners, who, consequently, repaired here with their merchandise more freely. The Danish pirates, however, were a serious hindrance to the foreign trade, for they infested the seas in such numbers as to make it dangerous for ships to attempt to cross the channel, until the naval power of England was restored by Alfred. That great king encouraged his subjects to make voyages of discovery and to open new sources of trade abroad. He opened a communication with Asia by sending a priest named Sighelm on a mission of charity to the Coromandel coast, to carry relief to a Christian colony settled there, which he was informed was in great

distress. That priest, it is stated, penetrated into India, and "brought home jewels of a new kind, with which that country very much abounds."

Foreign commerce greatly increased under the auspices of Alfred, who collected from various sources valuable treasures from the East. Asserius, a monk who wrote a work on the affairs of England at that time, mentions that one morning, after Alfred had made him a grant of two abbeys with all their furniture, he presented him with a very fine silk cloak "and as much frankincense as a strong man could carry."

Commerce declined after the death of Alfred in consequence of the renewed incursions of the Danes; but his grandson Athelstane endeavoured to revive it and to give additional stimulus to commercial enterprise. With that object in view he made a law that "if a mariner or merchant so prosper as to make three voyages over the seas with a ship and cargo of his own he shall be advanced to the honour and dignity of a thane." He also established mints in the principal towns that had foreign trade, to facilitate the coinage of money.

The number of ships belonging to England had been much diminished after the death of Alfred; but in the middle of the tenth century Edgar made a great effort to increase the commercial navy, which he raised from one hundred ships to three hundred; and some Saxon writers, in their anxiety to magnify the power and glory of that prince, estimate the number of ships at upwards of three thousand. One of the laws made by Edgar to facilitate traffic enacted that all the money coined in the kingdom should be of one standard, and that the Winchester measure should be the only one used. In the succeeding reign of Ethelred, the wittenagemot held at Wantage passed laws for regulating the customs to be paid by ships at Billingsgate. It appears, from the proceedings of the wittenagemot, that there were then residing in London a company of German merchants, called "emperor's men," who were compelled to pay to the king, twice every year, in return for the protection afforded them, a tribute consisting of two pieces of gray cloth, one piece of brown cloth, ten pounds of pepper, five pairs of gloves, and two casks of wine. This company afterwards became well known as the Merchants of the Steelyard.

When Canute the Dane seized possession of the throne he suc-



ceeded in improving the commerce of the country by the wisdom of his measures, supported by his extensive authority. In 1031 he made a pilgrimage to Rome, where he entered into treaty with the Emperor Conrad II., by which he obtained liberty for all his subjects, merchants as well as pilgrims, to travel through France free from all tolls. Under the protection of Canute, the merchants of England, especially those of London, flourished and acquired a degree of importance greater than they had previously possessed. At the commencement of the next reign several of them attended the great council of the nation at Oxford, "where there were present nearly all the thanes to the north of the Thames and the seamen of London, who chose Harold to be their king."\* The "seamen" here mentioned were most probably those merchants who had been raised to the dignity of thane by making three voyages in their own ships, according to the law of Athelstane.

The imports during the greater portion of the Saxon period consisted of books on religious subjects, relics, pictures, and images of saints, vestments for the clergy, and ornaments for the churches. Venice had become the chief depository for the goods from the East, and was visited by British merchants, who brought from that city precious stones, gold, silver, silks, linen, spices, drugs, etc. The principal articles of export from England were slaves, horses, and other animals. Scarcely any corn was exported from this country after the departure of the Romans; the state of internal disorganization which continued for the most part of the Saxon dominion having checked the cultivation of the soil, and the quantity of corn produced was frequently not sufficient for the consumption of the inhabitants. The balance of trade, nevertheless, was in favour of this country, and foreign coin circulated extensively; so much so, indeed, that nearly all large payments for the sale of land, donations to churches, and valuable legacies were made in foreign money. This circumstance is the more remarkable, as the frequent exactions of the Danes, the tribute of Peter's pence to Rome, and coin taken from the kingdom by princes and pilgrims, in their visits to the Continent and to Rome, must have caused a heavy drain on the precious metals in the country.

There is much uncertainty respecting the actual value of the various denominations of Saxon coins. The following are given on

\* "Saxon Chronicle."

good authorities as an approximation of the weights of the different silver coins, with their metallic values at the present time :—

			£	s.	d.
The pound, equal to 5400 grains troy, or			2	16	3
Mark	3600	"	1	17	9
Mancus	675	" about	0	7	0½
Ora	450	"	0	4	8½
Great shilling	112½	"	0	1	2
Small shilling	90	"	0	0	11½
Penny	22½	"	0	0	2½
Halfpenny	11½	"	0	0	1½
Farthing	5½	"	0	0	0½
Styca, a copper coin equal to about ½ of a farthing.					

A curious distinction was made by the Saxons of *living money* and *dead money*; the former consisting of slaves, horses, cattle, and other live animals, which, having a fixed value, were regarded as money, to be given in exchange for other commodities.

The prices of the following articles about the end of the tenth century, in metallic value corresponding with an equal amount of silver at the present day, were :—

	£	s.	d.
A man (slave) .....	2	16	3
Horse .....	1	15	2
Mare, or colt .....	1	3	5
Ass, or mule .....	0	14	1
Ox .....	0	7	0½
Cow .....	0	5	6
Pig .....	0	1	10½
Sheep .....	0	1	2
Goat .....	0	0	5½

At the same period, an acre of the best land could be bought for four shillings of our money, or for one-third the price of an ass, and the latter animal, it will be observed, sold for double the price of an ox.

The readers of Shakspeare may be somewhat surprised to find the name of Macbeth associated with the progress of commerce in Great Britain; but the records of history have rescued the memory of the "Thane of Fife" from the black obloquy thrown on it by the poet.

The ruthless murderer and tyrant of the play was in truth one of Scotland's best kings, and in his reign that kingdom enjoyed considerable foreign trade, founded on its fishery. Macbeth, about the year 1040, made a pilgrimage to Rome, where he "won golden opinions from all sorts of men" by his charities, and after his return to Scotland he died peaceably in his bed, undisturbed by the vengeance of Macduff or by the incantations of the "weird sisters." The foreign trade of Scotland was opened as early as the year 836, when the people of the Netherlands resorted there for salted fish, which the Scotch were successful in curing. The Netherlands, however, at last learned the art themselves, and discontinued their trade with Scotland, from which the natives had derived great benefit.

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## CHAPTER II.

### FROM THE CONQUEST TO THE ACCESSION OF HENRY VIII.

THE Norman Conquest was by no means so prejudicial to the interests of commerce as might be supposed. Though the Anglo-Saxons suffered much oppression from the haughty barons, and the pursuits of industry were despised by them, yet other counteracting circumstances more than compensated for that discouragement. The free communication that was opened with Normandy, in the first instance, introduced a greater variety of foreign produce, whilst the frequent expeditions to the Continent excited constant attention to foreign trade and to maritime affairs generally; and when, in the progress of events during the Norman-Saxon period, some of the richest provinces of France became annexed to the English crown, the increased intercourse with those provinces gave additional stimulus to commerce. Another important incentive to the trade of the country was produced by the immigration of Jews, who came over, for the first time, shortly after the Conquest, and those people, who, in an eminent degree, possess the faculty of trading, assisted materially in furthering the progress of commerce. William also invited foreigners to come to this country by offers of protection.

The encouragement given to foreign merchants by the Conqueror and by subsequent sovereigns was displeasing to the people, who

frequently manifested their displeasure by unruly conduct, and the popular jealousy of foreigners sometimes rose so high that it was found expedient to expel them for a time from the city of London.\* The foreign merchants, however, though disliked, did not so directly interfere with the demand for labour as the foreign artificers, and being supported by the kings, priests, and barons, who found them useful in several ways, they maintained their ground and continued to prosper. The citizens of London having presented a petition to Edward I., in 1289, praying him to expel the foreigners, were met with the peremptory refusal: "I am of opinion that the merchant strangers are useful and beneficial to the great men of the kingdom, therefore I will not expel them." Notwithstanding the powerful protection the foreign merchants received, they were not unfrequently insulted and assaulted, and sometimes they were murdered. It is mentioned by Walsingham, in his History of England, that a very rich Genoese merchant presented a petition to Richard II., for permission to warehouse his goods in the Castle of Southampton, promising to bring to this country so large a share of the trade of the East that the price of a pound of pepper would be reduced to fourpence, and all other spices in proportion; but the London merchants being apprehensive that he would monopolize the trade, hired assassins to murder him in the street.

In the reign of King John several guilds or corporations were established for the promotion of commerce and manufactures. Among these, the company of German Merchants of the Steelyard was the most ancient, and for several years continued the most flourishing of the trading companies, in consequence of its connection with the confederation of the Hanse Towns.

The company of the Merchants of the Staple was another of the public companies formed at the beginning of the thirteenth century, to which special privileges were granted. It was established for the purchase and sale of the surplus produce of the country, the chief articles being wool and woollen cloths, leather, lead, and tin, and for the conveyance of those products to certain staple towns, to facilitate the collection of the king's customs and for the accommodation of foreign merchants. Another part of the allotted business of the company—in which none but foreigners were permitted to partake—was the exportation of the goods. The staple towns for England

\* See "Progress of Manufactures," page 26.

were Newcastle-upon-Tyne, York, Lincoln, Norwich, Bristol, and Carmarthen. The locations of the Merchants of the Staple were exempted from the jurisdiction of ordinary magistrates, and they were subjected only to the authority of officers specially appointed annually in each of those towns, to judge in all disputes, by the law-merchant and not by common law. All bargains were registered, and six mediators were appointed, two of whom were Englishmen, two Germans, and two Lombards, for the purpose of determining, in the presence of the officers of the staple, all disputes that might be referred to them. Many privileges were bestowed on this company, and it was made felony to attempt to deprive them of any of those



WHARF OF THE MERCHANTS OF THE STEELYARD IN 1500.

advantages. This company for many years carried on its business in Westminster, but, in 1378, it was removed to the place now known as Staple's Inn, in Holborn. The Merchants of the Staple having pursued a successful career for three hundred years, were ruined at the beginning of the seventeenth century by the successful progress of the company of Merchant Adventurers, which was originally established with the title of the Brotherhood of St. Thomas Beckett.

The most ancient regular commercial treaty between the King of England and a foreign prince was made in 1217, between Henry III. and Haquim, King of Norway, in which protection and favour were mutually promised to the mercantile subjects of both nations. In the subsequent portion of this period commercial treaties multiplied very rapidly, and there was scarcely a trading country in Europe with which the Kings of England did not enter into treaties of reciprocal protection and favour. These treaties often continued in force when the contracting parties were at war, and stipulations to that effect were sometimes expressly introduced. The trade between Flanders and this country, for example, was so important to the interests of each, that even when the two governments were at war the merchants seldom discontinued their commercial intercourse.

By one of the articles of Magna Charta, signed by King John at Runnymede, it was declared that foreign merchants should be secured from violence and illegal exactions; but the most important measure regarding the foreign traders during this period of history was the Charta Mercatoria, granted by Edward I., and confirmed by Edward III. In this charter, or declaration of privileges, conferred on foreign merchants, the customs duties to be paid by them in return were specifically stated. All the local authorities at fairs, in cities and towns, were commanded "to do speedy justice to the said merchants, according to the law-merchant, or the custom of merchants," and that in any trial in which they were concerned, one-half the jury should consist of foreigners, if that number could be obtained. The establishment of uniformity of weights and measures throughout the kingdom was one of the declarations of this celebrated charter. In consequence of the conditions on which the charter was granted, Edward I. is considered to be the first King of England who established customs on merchandise. Duties on foreign goods had, indeed, been levied long before his reign in the form of "prisa-ge," which was an unsettled demand, founded partly on the claim for services rendered in protecting the ships from being captured at sea, but in the Charta Mercatoria a fixed amount was substituted for prisage. This charter, which was generally favourable to foreigners, did not exempt them from the odious responsibility of being accountable, generally, for the misdeeds of any of their compatriots in this country; whether the offence was non-payment of a debt, or the commission of felony.

Jews were not included in the privileges granted to foreign traders. Great numbers of them had come to this country after the Conquest, and by their peculiar dexterity in trading, they contrived to amass great riches despite of the persecutions they constantly endured. The exactions on the Jews were so much greater than on the other members of the community, that a separate Exchequer for the Jews was established for receiving the sum<sup>s</sup> extorted from them in various ways. Not only were they liable to have their property plundered by the sovereigns and by the barons, but they were exposed to insult and outrage from the populace. A most horrible occurrence of this kind, at the time of the coronation of Richard I., may be mentioned as an illustration of the popular feeling against that people. During the coronation in London, the Jews, in consequence of some unfounded suspicion, were attacked, much of their property was destroyed, and several were killed. When the account of these proceedings reached York, where a great number of Jews were settled, the populace barbarously massacred nearly the whole of them, without distinction of age or sex, and plundered or destroyed all their property. For this atrocity the citizens of York suffered retribution in the loss of their foreign trade, which had so much diminished in the reign of Edward III. that York could only contribute one small ship to the fleet of that sovereign in his expedition against France.

The practice which the kings of that period adopted of compelling each seaport to furnish its quota of ships and sailors for the royal fleet in time of war was a serious tax, and tended materially to check the progress of commerce. It may be observed in this place that the ships built in England after the Conquest were much larger than those of the Saxons, and the English ship-builders were considered remarkably skilful in their art. Henry II., in order to prevent foreigners from participating in the advantages which this peculiar skill was supposed to bestow on the shipping of England, prohibited the sale of ships to foreigners.

Most of the domestic trade of the country was transacted at fairs, which were frequented by multitudes of people from all parts of the neighbouring country. Some of these fairs lasted for weeks. The fair of St. Giles's, Winchester, continued for sixteen days, during which time all trading in Winchester and in every place within seven miles of the fair was prohibited. At these fairs large tents were

erected in rows, so as to form regular streets, and they were inhabited by the traders, many of whom were foreigners. Kings, princes, and barons sent their agents to these places of general resort, where every kind of commodity was to be purchased, not excepting men and women.

The disgraceful traffic in slaves was not discontinued until the end of the fourteenth century, and for a long time after the Conquest slaves continued to be one of the principal articles of export from Great Britain. Bristol seems to have been notorious for dealing in slaves, and in the biography of Wulfstan, who was Bishop of Worcester at the time of the Conquest, the following account is given of that infamous traffic:—"There is a seaport town called Bristow, opposite to Ireland, into which its inhabitants make frequent voyages on account of trade. Wulfstan cured the people of this town of a most odious and inveterate custom, which they derived from their ancestors, of buying men and women in all parts of England, and exporting them to Ireland for the sake of gain. The young women they commonly got with child, and carried them to market in their pregnancy that they might bring a better price. You might have seen with sorrow long ranks of young persons of both sexes, and of the greatest beauty, tied together with ropes, and daily exposed for sale; nor were these men ashamed, oh, horrid wickedness! to give up their nearest relations, nay, their own children, to slavery."

The custom of holding fairs for the purpose of general traffic existed in Chester within the last forty years, when twice a year commodities of all kinds were exposed for sale in a building constructed for the purpose, to which fairs the people from the neighbouring counties in North Wales resorted, and purchased a store of goods sufficient to last them for half a year. The increase of towns in the principality gradually diminished the importance of these fairs, which have become almost extinct for the purposes for which they were established.

At the earlier part of the period now under consideration, it was the custom of some of the great barons to have among the officers of their household a merchant who transacted all the mercantile business of his chief; disposing of the produce of the soil, and purchasing clothes, wines, spices, and everything that was required to be bought. These merchants of the barons traded also on their own account. In after-times, however, the barons, and even kings, con-



descended to become traders. As an illustration of the manner in which Henry VI. contrived to make his mercantile adventures turn to good profit, a curious account is given of his purchase and disposal of a cargo of alum, of the value of £4000, from some Genoese merchants. The king did not pay for the article in money, but he granted an equivalent in the remission of customs' duties, and he sold the alum for twice the sum he paid for it by granting the purchaser a monopoly of the alum trade until the royal cargo was disposed of. By thus buying for nothing, and afterwards enhancing the price by monopoly, the king-merchants were enabled to replenish their exhausted coffers, and to drive all rivals in the trade out of the market. The clergy also engaged extensively in commerce. It is mentioned by Matthew Paris that the Abbot of St. Alban's, in the reign of Henry III., traded very largely in herrings, which his agents cured at Yarmouth, and sold "to the inestimable advantage as well as honour of his abbey." The religious profession was exempted from the payment of customs' duties, and, taking advantage of this privilege, the Cistercian monks became the greatest wool merchants in the kingdom, until Parliament interfered in 1344, and prohibited them from trading. Notwithstanding this proper interference of Parliament, religious communities continued for a long time afterwards to engage in commerce.

Bills of Exchange, as a means for facilitating commercial transactions, were invented in 1255, and the following curious account, highly illustrative of the manners of the age, is given of their origin:—Henry III. had contracted a heavy debt to the Pope, in prosecuting his project of making his son Edmund King of Sicily, and his Holiness, who was himself indebted to Italian merchants, from whom he had borrowed the money, became importunate for payment. In this exigency Peter Egibanke, Bishop of Hereford, suggested to Henry that the Italian merchants to whom the Pope was indebted, should draw bills in favour of their creditors in England on all the rich bishops, abbots, and priors in the kingdom for certain sums alleged to have been lent by them to those prelates for the use of their respective churches, that these bills should be sent to the Pope's legate in England, who should compel the prelates to accept and pay them by threats of ecclesiastical censures. This scheme was adopted by the King, who sent the Bishop of Hereford to Rome to procure the Pope's concurrence. When the Bishop had explained this nefarious plan to the

Pope, the answer of the infallible Head of the Church in the thirteenth century is said to have been, "Go, my dearest friend and brother, and do what seemeth best to thy own industry, which I commend." Thereupon, bills to the amount of 150,540 marks were drawn and presented, and the ecclesiastics were compelled to pay them by threats of excommunication.

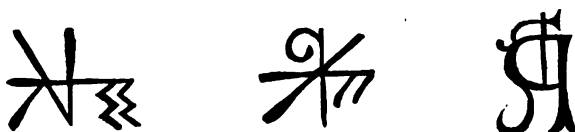
A law was made in 1381 commanding bills of exchange to be used in making remittances to foreign countries, and in the course of the next century the form in which they were drawn and the regulations as to payment were arranged nearly in the manner observed at the present day.

The value of money in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is indicated by the high rate of interest then paid for loans. Twenty per cent. was considered low, and as much as sixty per cent. was sometimes paid for money advanced. Jews were the principal money-lenders, for Christians were prohibited from taking interest, and their extortionate usury increased the prejudice against them on religious grounds. The unfortunate Jew merchants, who had the reputation of being rich, were in return exposed to all species of extortions from the kings and barons. They were fined large sums on the most frivolous pretexts, and often without any pretext at all. When the necessities of the king impelled him, he proceeded to extort money from the Jews, and, if they refused to pay, it was extracted from them by tortures. Henry III. in 1250 exacted 30,000 marks from Aaron, a rich Jew of York, on a charge of forgery, and King John obtained 10,000 marks from a Jew of Bristol by ordering one of his teeth to be drawn each day until he complied. The Jew submitted to the torture of having seven teeth extracted before he produced the money.

The English merchants commenced in the twelfth century to adopt from the Continent the practice of having distinguishing marks, which were painted on their shop-fronts, on the most conspicuous places in their dwellings, and were branded on their goods. When a rich merchant made a gift to a church, his mark was emblazoned on the window, and it was engraved on his tomb. In this manner many merchants' marks are still preserved.

The inland trade was seriously impeded by the bands of robbers who infested the roads, and plundered the merchants and traders in the most barefaced manner. Many of these robberies were committed by or with the connivance of persons about the court, who, not being

able to obtain payment of their salaries, resorted to all available illegal means to procure money. Two Brabant merchants applied to Henry III. at Winchester for justice against robbers, who had plundered their goods, and they informed him that they knew the robbers, and saw their faces every day in his court. Henry, being provoked by these outrages, ordered the robbers to be tried, but the



MERCHANTS' MARKS OF THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES.

jury, though consisting of twelve men of property in Hampshire, acquitted them. Henry was so highly incensed at the verdict that he committed the jury to prison, and a fresh jury was sworn, who, with that warning before them, convicted the prisoners. Several of the king's household were discovered to have participated in the robbery, and they said in excuse that as they had received no wages from the king they were obliged to maintain themselves.

All travellers were exposed to the danger of being robbed and murdered, and these crimes escaped with impunity, because the ministers of justice were themselves in confederacy with the robbers. Traders who ventured to convey their goods into the country combined together for mutual protection, and went armed ready to offer resistance when they were attacked. The insecurity of property increased to such a degree in the reign of Edward II., after the famine, when the nobility were obliged to dismiss their retainers, that no place was safe from the incursions of robbers, who met in troops, like armies, and overran the country. Even two Pope's legates, though attended by a numerous retinue, were robbed of their goods and equipage when travelling on the highway. The intercourse between different parts of the country must, under these circumstances, have been very restricted. No stronger evidence of the limited internal traffic of England could be offered than is afforded by an Act of Parliament passed in 1440, giving power to collectors of the customs to grant licenses for carrying corn from one county to another, which had been previously interdicted. The state of the roads at that time must have also contributed to prevent communication. Tolls for mending the highways were first levied in the reign of Edward III. The *road* on which tolls were

collected for the first time was from St. Giles's to Temple Bar in London.

Nearly all the foreign trade of the country was carried on in foreign ships, notwithstanding the encouragement offered, by Athelstane and by succeeding sovereigns, to English merchants to trade to distant ports in their own vessels. There was a great decrease in the number of English ships at the time of Richard II. The Parliament complained that one port formerly contained as much shipping as was then to be found in the whole kingdom, and they ascribed the deficiency to the arbitrary seizure of shipping by Edward III. for his frequent expeditions to France. There was, indeed, but poor encouragement to build ships, when they were liable, at any moment, to be seized for the purposes of war. Until the reign of Henry V., about forty years afterwards, no King of England possessed any ship of his own, and, in case of war, the ships engaged in commerce were taken possession of. With the view of increasing the mercantile navy, an Act was passed in the reign of Richard II., by which all exports and imports were prohibited, except in English ships. This prohibition was relaxed thirty years afterwards in favour of the merchants of Venice. It was not, indeed, until the middle of the fourteenth century that English ships began to navigate to the Baltic; and the regular Mediterranean trade was not opened for nearly a century afterwards. The practice of merchant ships carrying cannon as a protection against pirates was commenced in the former period.

Security is essential to navigation and commerce, and the great prosperity of many of the seaport towns in this country and abroad depended on the security they afforded. Thus Venice flourished, because it was built upon islands out of the reach of the barbarians who were devastating the north of Italy. The prosperous towns of Antwerp and Bruges were secure by their inland positions, whilst London, Bristol, and York, being remote from the sea, also enjoyed security from piratical attacks. Bruges was highly favoured by foreign trade, as it formed an intermediate port where vessels from the south of Europe to the north could safely unload, and take on board a return cargo to complete the voyage within the year, the distance from Venice to the north of Europe being considered too great to be accomplished in one season. Bruges thus became the great *entrepôt* for goods from all parts of Europe.

An interesting general account of the commerce of Europe in the

fifteenth century is contained in a curious poem, written about 1437, called "The Libel of English Policy." The trade of England at that time consisted principally in wool, which was said to have been finer even than the wool of Spain, and was imported into that country for the manufacture of the finer kinds of cloths. This commercial intercourse with Spain was carried on indirectly through Bruges, to which all the Spanish exports were sent. These consisted of the natural produce of figs, raisins, wine, dates, liquorice, Seville oil, grain, Castille soap, wax, iron, wool, saffron, and quicksilver, nearly as at the present day. Similar products were imported to this country from Portugal direct, and the Genoese merchants came here direct in "great carracks," to purchase wool and woollen cloths in exchange for cloth of gold, silks, pepper, woad, wool, oil, cotton, and alum. The trade with Venice and Florence was also carried on directly in large galleys, which brought to this country spices and groceries, wines, apes, and other foreign animals, and articles of luxury. The amount of their imports is stated to have been greater than the value of the goods they exported, the balance being paid to them in gold. The Venetian merchants are said to have so well understood the manœuvres of commerce, that they bought the wool, cloth, and tin they exported on credit, and then sold them at Bruges for ready money five per cent. under cost price, and derived their profits from the interest of the money during the interval. It is stated by the writer of "The Libel" that the English purchased more goods in Brabant than all other nations together. These goods consisted of mercery, haberdashery, and groceries, and the merchants were compelled to complete the sales of the goods they took over, and to make their own purchases within a month. A trade to Iceland for fish had been then established from Scarborough and Bristol, which trade the Danes attempted to prevent.\*

About the same time we find the following notice of the trade of England and the prosperity of London by a Byzantine historian, founded on the personal observations made by the Emperor of Constantinople when he paid a visit to England to solicit aid against the Turks:—"Britain is full of towns and villages. It has no vines, and but little fruit, but it abounds in corn, honey, and wool, from which the natives make great quantities of cloth. London, the capital, may be preferred to every city of the West for population, opulence, and

\* Macpherson's "Annals of Commerce."

luxury. It is seated on the river Thames, which, by the advantage of the tide, daily receives and despatches trading vessels from and to various countries."

A large portion of the public revenue was derived from the duties imposed on imports and exports, and it was this fact that induced the kings of England and the Parliament to take interest in the prosperity of commerce, and to pass many measures for its regulation, which were, however, generally unwise, and were founded on the narrowest principles of policy. The collection of the duties was an important branch of the public service, and at each of the staple seaports there were officers appointed for the service, and buildings appropriated for con-



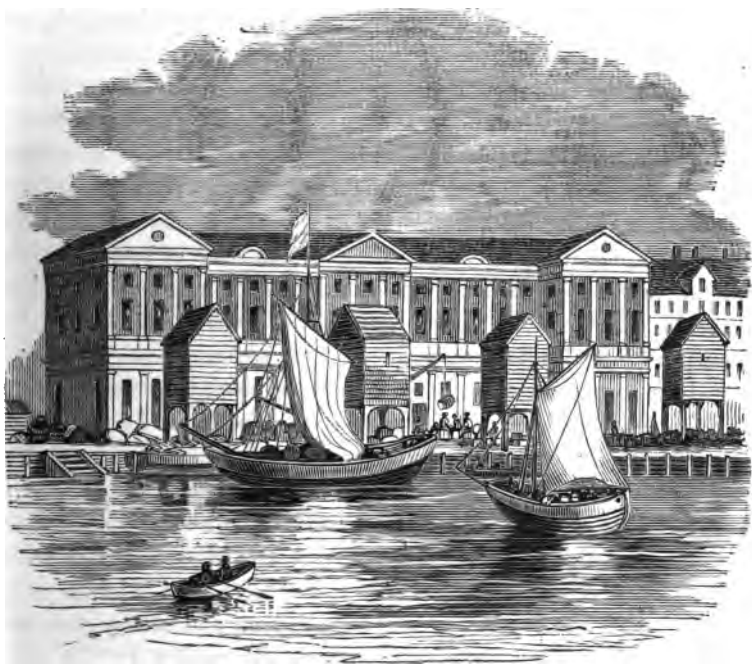
THE CUSTOM-HOUSE, WITH LONDON-BRIDGE AND PART OF LONDON, 1450.

ducting the business of the customs. In the port of London, the custom-house was situated close to Billingsgate, the wharf where the ships trading abroad were laden and discharged their cargoes. The custom-house, as represented in some manuscripts of the fifteenth century, was built close to the river on open arches, which afforded shelter from the weather, and it resembled a warehouse for the storing of goods.

The custom-house was subsequently rebuilt, and a print from Hollar represents the more modern structure as it appeared before the great fire in 1666.

As the foreign trade increased, the English merchants naturally

wished to possess similar advantages in the chief marts of trade on the Continent which foreign merchants enjoyed in this country, and to have the protection of recognized authorities. The merchants trading to the Hanse Towns were accordingly, at their request, empowered by the king to elect a governor, to whom they could refer the settlement of disputes between them and the native merchants. The same privilege was soon afterwards granted to the merchants trading to Holland, Brabant, Flanders, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. These governors were authorized by the king to give



THE CUSTOM-HOUSE OF LONDON BEFORE THE GREAT FIRE.

the protection of the government to the English traders in those places, their functions being very similar to those of consuls at the present day.

We have before alluded briefly to the unwise meddling of the King and Parliament with the affairs of trade, which was, if possible, more objectionable than their interference with the regulations of manufactures, noticed in the preceding section. Among

the other instances of this kind, may be mentioned a law passed in the reign of Henry IV., to compel foreigners trading to this country to expend in English manufactures all the money they obtained from the sale of their goods; and, furthermore, that all the goods they imported should be sold within three months. By a statute of Henry VI. all Englishmen were prohibited from selling goods to foreigners on credit; but the injurious effects of this law on trade caused it to be soon repealed. In Richard III.'s reign it was provided that the wool should be sold to foreigners exactly as it was shorn from the sheep, without being sorted. Numerous restrictions were laid on foreign traders to prevent them from buying in one part of the kingdom and selling in another; and among other attempts to regulate the imports, it was enacted, that with every butt of Malmsey or Tyre wine brought to this country, the merchants should import "ten good and able bowstaves." The compulsory importation of bowstaves was a new device for lowering the price of bows, a previous law, fixing the price at not more than 3s. 4d. each, having failed to produce the desired effect. The scarcity of bowstaves was declared in the Act to have been caused "by the seditious conspiracy of the Lombards trading to this country." In the same reign an Act was passed intended to reduce the price of Malmsey wine, which was alleged to have been raised "by subtle and crafty means," from 50 shillings the butt of 126 and 140 gallons, to eight marks for a butt that contained only 108 gallons. It was also a matter of complaint that in former times the importer of wine took two parts of the payment in cloth, but that he then took no cloth. The sole remedy proposed for this grievance was to order that the butt should be enlarged to its former size, without making any stipulation as to price. In the reign of Henry VII. the exportation of plate, bullion, and money was prohibited; and also the exportation of horses. By another Act the wages of labour were fixed by law. Some attempt was also made to check exorbitant profits in trading, it being stated in the preamble of the statute on the subject, that goods purchased by traders for sixpence, were sometimes sold by them for three shillings.

In 1314 a law was passed to fix the price of all kinds of provisions, but the effect of the law was directly opposite to what was intended, for instead of providing a supply of food at a regulated low price, it prevented provisions from being produced, when they could not be sold at remunerative prices, and a famine was the consequence. The absurd



attempt to make food cheap by law was consequently abandoned. Parliament undertook in 1363 the still more difficult task of fixing a scale of food and clothing for the various classes of society; the food they were to eat and the dresses they were to wear being regulated according to the rank, fortune, or profession of each. In the same year all traders were restricted from dealing in more than one kind of goods; but this restriction was found so objectionable that in the year following the law was repealed.

Numerous laws were made for the purpose of encouraging the home trade, and for preventing foreigners from participating so largely as they were accustomed to do in the commerce of this kingdom; but experience shortly proved the impolicy of such regulations. Thus, for example, the merchants of Holland and Flanders were so annoyed by the vexatious impositions to which they were subjected, that they discontinued trading with England altogether; and the English merchants having experienced great inconvenience from this cessation of intercourse, they petitioned Parliament that the foreign merchants should be invited to resume their trading with this country. The restrictions on foreign trade were in consequence relaxed in 1428; and two years subsequently the law prohibiting the sale of goods to foreigners on credit was repealed.

It has been previously noticed as evidence that the balance of foreign trade was in favour of this country, that most large purchases were paid for in foreign coins; but at a later period this position of things was reversed, and English coins were commonly current on the Continent. It is stated, for example, that when Eric, King of Sweden, in 1408, bought the isle of Gothland from the Hanse Towns, he paid for it in English nobles; and on the settlement of some commercial differences between Henry IV. and the same trading community, the mutual compensations awarded to be paid to the merchants of the two countries for injuries they had sustained, were stipulated to be paid in English nobles, as if that coin was then commonly current abroad. It appears, nevertheless, from the accounts of the imports and exports, that the balance of trade continued in favour of this country, for in 1354, the imports are stated to have amounted to only £38,970, whilst the value of the exported goods was £294,180.

Notwithstanding the many vexatious laws and regulations by which the commerce of the country was placed in trammels, and the free action of trade and manufactures impeded, during the four centuries after the

Norman conquest, those who were engaged in commercial pursuits continued to prosper, and several English merchants amassed wealth and attained high honours.

One of the most remarkable instances of the successful prosecution of commerce having become the means of acquiring riches, rank, and power, was that of William de la Pole, who was a merchant at Hull, in the reign of Edward III. He was one of the richest merchants of the age, and on one occasion he lent the king £18,500, which, considering the higher value of money at that time, was an enormous sum for a private individual to have at his command. In return for his large contribution to the royal treasury in time of need, Edward III. knighted him, made him Chief Baron of his Exchequer, and he was subsequently employed on foreign embassies, and in other important state affairs. His son Michael, also a merchant, was created Earl of Suffolk by Richard II., and was raised to the dignity of Lord Chancellor. The descendants of the Earl of Suffolk went on increasing in dignity and importance until they became dukes and allied to royalty. The second Duke of Suffolk married the Princess Elizabeth, the sister of King Edward IV., and his son was declared by Richard III. to be presumptive heir to the crown of England. In the reign of Henry VII. the greatness of the merchant family of the De la Poles was extinguished; their elevation having raised the last Duke of Suffolk to the dangerous position of being a claimant for the English crown.

In the reign of Henry VI. a Bristol merchant, named William Canning, was celebrated for his extensive mercantile transactions. It is recorded, on his monument, in St. Mary Redcliffe church at Bristol, that shipping to the amount of 2470 tons, belonging to him, was seized by Edward IV., among which ships were included some as large as 800 tons burthen. In 1450 permission was granted to him by Henry VI. to employ two ships of any burthen for two years in the trade of Iceland and Finmark, and to export in them any goods excepting such as the staple of Calais possessed the exclusive privilege of exporting. This royal favour to the rich merchant serves to show incidentally the kind of restrictions that were then imposed on the commerce with foreign countries.

The story of Whittington and his cat preserves on record the existence of one of London's wealthy merchants of the fifteenth century, though truth compels us to say that the marvellous part of his history, as narrated in the nursery tale, has only a fabulous foundation. Whit-

tington, instead of being a poor scullion boy, was in reality the son of Sir William Whittington, of the Mercers' Company. Though the stone is still at the foot of Highgate Hill, whereon Whittington rested, as it is told, when he heard Bow bells calling to him, "Turn again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London," it is but a false witness to an imaginary event. The wealth of Whittington, however, was a substantial reality. He was three times elected Lord Mayor of London, and during his second mayoralty he lent Henry IV. the sum of £1000 on the security of the customs on wool and hides, though the most opulent of the nobility contributed at the same time not more than £500 to relieve the king's necessities.

We not unfrequently hear at the present day of the declining prosperity of England, and the "good old times" are referred to with regret, as if they far surpassed the existing state of things. Such complainings are but the echoes of foregone lamentations, and even in the middle of the thirteenth century we find an historian thus exalting in glowing colours the "good old times," before the civil wars, and grieving over the fall of England:—

"Oh, England! formerly glorious, illustrious and exalted among the kingdoms like the grandeur of the Chaldeans. The ships of Tarshish were not comparable to thy ships; carrying aromatics and all precious merchandise through the four climates of the globe. The sea was thy wall, and castles strongly fortified were the gates of thy harbours. In thee the chivalry of arts and commerce flourished. To thee the Genoese and Venetians transported the sapphire, the carbuncle, and the maragdus, drawn from the rivers of Paradise. Asia supplied thee with the finest linen and purple; Africa with incense and balsam; Spain with gold; and Germany with silver. For thee Flanders, thy weaver, made precious drapery of thy own materials; for thee thy own Gascoigne produced wine. To thee all the islands between the Hyades and Arcturus were subservient. Thy inland parts abounded with wild beasts of the woods, and thy hills with cattle of every kind. Thou didst possess the fowls of the air. Thy fields were beautiful. In the abundance of fish thou surpassed every region, and though thou hast but a narrow tract of land, confined within the shores of the sea, yet the coasts of all the nations of the world, warmed by the fleeces of thy sheep, have blessed thy cultivated fertility. Alas! why art thou now stripped of thy glory?"

The revenues and the commerce of England at the commencement of

the 13th century, which were so glowingly described as indicating the height of prosperity, would present a strange contrast to the present condition of the commerce and manufactures of Great Britain, and the writer who thus lauded the former greatness of this country, and lamented its departure as hopeless of restoration, would be astounded could he now behold its ports crowded with shipping carrying a thousand-fold more goods to regions then undreamed of, than were conveyed, when at the supposed pinnacle of its glory, to all parts of the known world.

The commerce of Scotland, during the period we are now considering, bore but a small proportion to that of England, and such foreign trade as was carried on was principally in exchange for the produce of her fisheries. There was seldom any intercourse between the bordering kingdoms, the strong political animosity that generally prevailed having been extended to matters of commerce. In the middle of the twelfth century, King David paid much attention to trade and manufactures, and he introduced several of the manufacturing arts from England; but they were in an inferior condition. As an instance of the animosity that then existed between the two nations, it may be mentioned that Edward I. attempted to prevent Scotland from trading with Flanders by introducing a clause into a treaty with the Earl of Flanders for the exclusion of Scotland from commercial intercourse, but the Earl indignantly refused to comply. In 1358, more friendly relations were established; the trade was opened across the border, and the money of the two kingdoms passed in common. The Scottish Parliament, like that of England, interfered vexatiously with the course of trade, and passed many laws which had a prejudicial effect on domestic and on foreign commerce. The enumerated exports from Scotland in the middle of the fifteenth century were wool, fish, hides, and cattle.

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### CHAPTER III.

FROM HENRY VIII. TO THE ACCESSION OF QUEEN ANNE.

THE invention of the mariner's compass and the consequent discovery of America near the close of the fifteenth century, constituted an era in the progress of commerce throughout the world, and though the influence

of the discovery of the New World was for the first two centuries principally felt by Spain, this country gradually participated in the extension of commerce which the opening of that market created. The northern shores of America were discovered by Sebastian Cabot, a few years after the Spaniards landed in Mexico, and an English colony was established there—the forerunner of the important and extensive settlements afterwards made by our countrymen on that part of the American continent. The stable though arbitrary governments of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth, by tending to encourage the manufactures of the country, also greatly extended its commerce. The splendid style of living in the former reign occasioned the importation of a large amount of very costly productions from abroad, and cloths of gold and silver, velvets, silks, embroidery, jewels, plate, wines, and spices, were brought over in large quantities. The foreign trade was carried on principally by the German Merchants of the Steelyard, who were patronized by the king to the great annoyance of his subjects, and several serious riots broke out in consequence of the encouragement given to foreign artizans and to foreign merchants, as mentioned in the preceding section.\* The burthen of the popular complaints was, “that the English merchants had little to do by reason the merchant strangers bring in all silks, cloths of gold, wine, oil, iron, etc., that no man, almost, buyeth of an Englishman; they also export so much wool, tin, and lead, that English adventurers can have no living; that foreigners compass the city round about, in Southwark, Westminster, Temple Bar, Holborn, St. Martin’s-le-Grand, St. John Street, Aldgate, Tower Hill, and St. Catherine’s, and they forestall the market so that no good thing from them cometh to the market, which are the causes that Englishmen want and starve, whilst foreigners live in abundance and pleasure.”†

The Merchants of the Steelyard, and the company of Merchant Adventurers engrossed between them all the foreign trade of the kingdom. The latter company consisted almost entirely of Englishmen, and every English merchant was admitted into it on the payment of a small fine. These two trading bodies had frequent disputes with each other respecting alleged invasions of their respective privileges, and the English company often complained of its rivals to the king, but as the latter were the richer of the two, they obtained the royal favour by valuable presents, and the complaints of the English merchants, whether well or ill-founded, were not regarded. In the succeeding

\* Page 26.

† Hall.

reign, however, the company of Merchant Adventurers prevailed on Edward VI. to revoke the privileges of the Merchants of the Steelyard. They were partially restored by Queen Mary, but the company did not recover its former position. It continued to linger on till Queen Elizabeth, in 1597, in consequence of the Emperor Rudolph having shut up the factories of the English Merchant Adventurers in Germany, ordered the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London to shut up the warehouses occupied by the Merchants of the Steelyard, and that put an end to the company after it had, for upwards of 600 years, engrossed the greater part of the foreign commerce of this country.

The Merchant Adventurers had, for some time previously, assumed the privilege of restricting the trade of Englishmen with the Continent, and their exactions became so vexatious, that frequent complaints were made against them, so that an Act of Parliament had been passed in 1497 to limit the fine chargeable for admission into the company to ten marks (£6 13s. 4d.). Though thus restricted in their pecuniary exactions, the company of Merchant Adventurers, when their foreign rivals were suppressed, became very oppressive to independent traders in other parts of the country, and the monopoly they claimed to trade with foreign ports was a source of contention and dissatisfaction throughout the whole of this period.

The discovery of the New World was made in the endeavour to find a westerly passage to the East Indies, and about the same time the easterly passage by the Cape of Good Hope was discovered; but little direct benefit was derived by England from these discoveries for upwards of a century afterwards. The immediate effects were felt by the Spaniards, the Venetians, and the Portuguese. The gold brought from Mexico gave Spain an important advantage, in the first instance, over the other countries of Europe, but the ultimate effect of the abundance of the precious metals was most disastrous to her, as it diverted attention from manufacturing industry, whilst, on the rest of Europe, it materially raised the money value of all commodities. The discovery of the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope was a serious blow to the commerce of Venice, to which port the spices and costly products of the East Indies had been previously carried from the Levant, and as the Portuguese were the first who opened the direct communication with India by sea, Lisbon sprang into importance as a commercial *entrepôt*.

Several attempts were made to maintain the overland communication

with India, and English merchants, in their endeavours to rival the Portuguese trade with the East, succeeded in establishing a valuable commerce in the produce of the ports of the Mediterranean. The Turkey Company was formed for trading with the Levant, and became an important public body in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, though they failed in several attempts to maintain communication with India. By that company the produce of Greece, Syria, and Egypt was brought to this country at a much cheaper rate than previously, and the ordinary gains of the merchants were estimated at three to one. The voyage to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean was then looked upon as an undertaking of great difficulty and danger, and the ships engaged in the Levant trade were of a larger size than had been employed in commerce with the Continent.

Another means of intercourse with India was attempted to be opened through Russia, the trade with which country was vigorously prosecuted in the reign of Queen Mary, who granted a charter to a Russian company, of which Sebastian Cabot was made the governor. An agent of the company named Jenkinson, penetrated through the country to Bokhara, where a large store of the produce of the East Indies was collected; but little advantage was taken of his enterprise until a century and a half afterwards, when, so recently as the reign of George II., the project of trading with India through Russia was revived, and an Act of Parliament was passed, in 1741, to encourage the transport of goods from Bokhara through Russia to England. It may be noticed in this place, as an exemplification of the transitions that occur in the course of traffic and the modes of communication, that the overland route to India, which was then abandoned because it occupied too much time, has, by the adoption of another course of travel, and by the aid of steam-power applied to locomotion, become, at the present time, an established, and by far the most speedy, means of communication with India.

Among other branches of distant foreign commerce that were opened during the earlier portion of this period, was the trade to the coast of Guinea, whence gold-dust and elephant's teeth were brought in 1530, and about thirty years afterwards the detestable trade in negro slaves from the coast of Africa began. The demand for labour to cultivate the sugar plantations of Hispaniola (St. Domingo), revived this revolting traffic in human beings after a cessation of it in England for several centuries. The first Englishman who has the disgrace of having been

engaged in this trade was John Hawkins, who formed a company for the purpose. The African company first sent out three ships, partly laden with English produce, to the coast of Guinea, where the cargo was completed by taking on board negro slaves. They were conveyed to Hispaniola, where they were sold to the Spanish planters, and the return cargo consisted of hides, sugar, ginger, and pearls. Three prosperous voyages of this kind were made by Hawkins, who, in commemoration of his priority in the African slave trade, received, as an addition to his coat of arms, in heraldic designation, "a demi-Moor proper bound with a cord." This same Hawkins became distinguished in the reign of Elizabeth as a naval commander, and was knighted. The trade with Brazil was also opened in the middle of the sixteenth century; and in 1579 the Fellowship of Eastland Merchants, which was established for trading to the north-western coasts of Europe, received exclusive privileges for trading to Norway.

The principal foreign trade of the country, however, continued to be with the Netherlands, and the forced termination of the wars with that country, in the reign of Henry VII. and of Henry VIII., serve to show how essential the continuance of the trade was to the prosperity of the merchants of both nations. When, for example, the Flemings were expelled from England in consequence of the encouragement given by the Duchess Dowager of Burgundy to Perkin Warbeck, the pretender to the English crown, the interruption of the trade between the two countries was found so inconvenient, and, as expressed by Bacon, "pinched the merchants of both nations so very sore," that, after a suspension of intercourse for three years, commissioners were appointed to arrange a treaty for its renewal. When the English merchants returned to Antwerp, they were received with public demonstrations of joy. A similar result followed the declaration of war by Henry VIII. against the Emperor in 1528. On that occasion there was such a strong expression of dissatisfaction by the trading community, that the king's council advised him "that the resultance of war in the Low Countries could be nothing but a grievance to his subjects, a decay of trade, and a diminution of his customs." It was, therefore, resolved that the war should be suspended.

The commercial ports of the Netherlands with which the trade of England was carried on underwent great vicissitudes during the latter portion of the sixteenth century. Antwerp, in a great measure, superseded Bruges after the opening of the trade with India by the Portu-



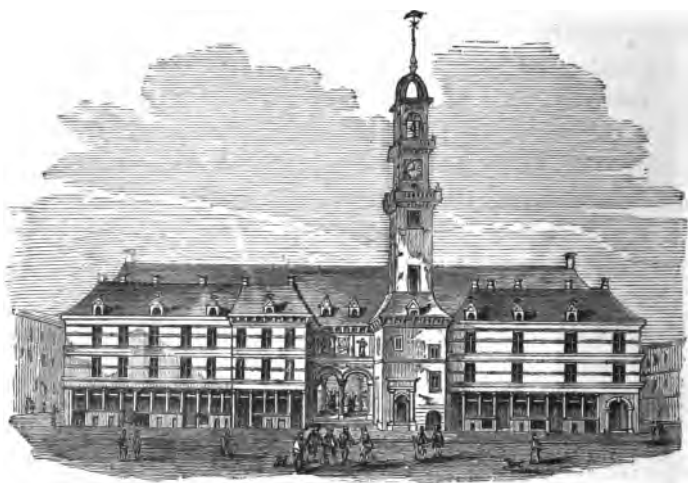
guese ; but the fortunes of the latter port were revived in 1558, by the removal there of the staple of Calais, when that place, which had been in possession of the English for 211 years, was delivered to the French. The taking and sack of Antwerp by the Duke of Parma, in 1585, caused the destruction of its commerce and that of the Spanish Netherlands. Amsterdam and Rotterdam then became the chief commercial cities with which the commerce of England was carried on. In the account given by Ludovico Guicciardini, in his "Description of the Netherlands," of the prosperous condition of Antwerp shortly before its destruction, he observes :—"To England Antwerp sends jewels and precious stones, silver bullion, quicksilver, wrought silks, cloth of gold and silver, gold and silver thread, camblets, grograms, spices, drugs, sugar, cotton, cummin, galls, linens fine and coarse, serges, demi-ostades, tapestry, madder, hops in great quantities, glass, salt, fish, metallic and other merceries of all sorts, to a great value, arms of all kinds, ammunition for war, and household furniture. From England Antwerp receives vast quantities of fine and coarse draperies, fringes, and other things of that kind, to a great value, the finest wool, excellent saffron in small quantities, a great quantity of lead and tin, sheep and rabbit-skins without number, and various other sorts of fine peltry and leather, beer, cheese, and other sorts of provisions in great quantities ; also Malmsey wines, which the English import from Candia. To Scotland Antwerp sends but little, as that country is chiefly supplied from England and France."

In speaking of the general trade of England with the Netherlands, the same author observes :—"It is marvellous to think of the vast quantity of drapery imported by the English into the Netherlands, it being undoubtedly, one year with another, above 200,000 pieces of all kinds," the value of which was estimated at one million sterling. The commerce with the Dutch Netherlands went on increasing during the next century, and on the breaking up of the frost in 1674, it is noted that 300 English, Scotch, and Irish ships sailed out of Rotterdam on the same day.

The internal communications of the country and the coasting trade received much attention during the reign of Henry VIII. The navigation of the great rivers in England was improved, the harbours were repaired, and in the fourth year of his reign he established by royal charter the Corporation of the Trinity House, "for examining, licensing, and regulating pilots, and for the erection of beacons and lighthouses

along the coast, and the placing of buoys at the entrances to the rivers and harbours." These useful measures contributed materially to improve the intercourse between the different ports of the kingdom, and thus afforded additional facilities to the commercial transactions which increased so rapidly in the sixteenth century.

In the middle of that century, the notable event of the erection of the Royal Exchange took place. The merchants of London had been accustomed to meet in Lombard Street in the open air, though at Antwerp, and other important commercial cities on the Continent, appropriate buildings had been for some years provided for the meeting of merchants. Sir Thomas Gresham, Queen Elizabeth's merchant, who had the management of her money affairs with foreign states, felt that



FIRST ROYAL EXCHANGE.

it was a disgrace to the merchants of London that they should not have similar accommodation for the transaction of business, and he munificently offered to erect such a building at his own cost, if suitable ground were granted him for the purpose. The site of the present Royal Exchange was fixed upon, and the ground was purchased by the city of London for £3532. The first stone was laid on the 7th of June, 1566, and on the 23rd of January it was publicly opened by the Queen. The building, which was of brick, consisted of a quadrangular arcade surrounding an open court, with galleries above containing shops and offices.

Sir Thomas Gresham bequeathed the building to the Corporation of London and to the Mercers' Company in equal shares, together with other valuable property, for the benefit of his fellow-citizens. The fire of London in 1666, which destroyed all the buildings in the city to the westward of London Bridge, swept away in its devastating career the



SECOND ROYAL EXCHANGE.

first Royal Exchange. A stone building on a more extensive scale, but constructed on the same general plan, was then built by the Corporation and the Mercers' Company, at a cost of £80,000. That building was, in 1838, again destroyed by fire, and the present magnificent structure was erected in its place, and was opened by Queen Victoria on the 28th of October, 1845.

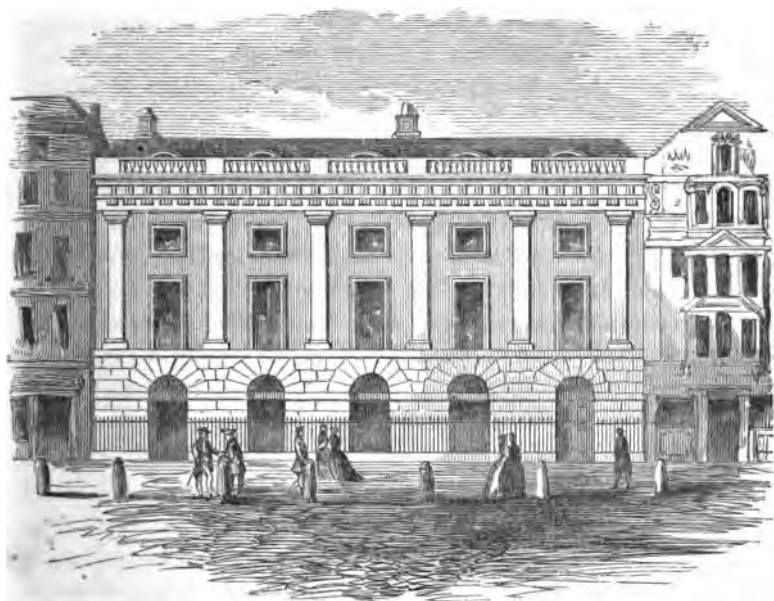
The stimulus given to commerce in the long and prosperous reigns

of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth was not relaxed during the succeeding century; for though somewhat checked during the Civil Wars, commercial pursuits continued to thrive so vigorously, that they are described by Anderson, in his "History of Commerce," as having advanced to the zenith of perfection. His sketch of the general character of the seventeenth century is to the following effect:—

"From its commencement it nearly approached to a resemblance of modern times, whether considered in a commercial or a political light; either in respect of riches, knowledge, or religion. Towards the close of it, commerce gradually advanced to almost its very zenith of perfection. Almost all the commercial, banking, and metallic companies are established nearly as at present subsisting; the great and principal increase of the commerce of England and Holland is effected. The Hanse Towns lose their trade more and more to the Dutch and English. The trade from the several countries of Europe to the East Indies is brought to great maturity, especially by the English and the Dutch, who, to the very close of this century, may be said to possess much the greatest part of the naval commerce of Europe. Naval architecture is also brought to great perfection. Commercial treaties between different nations are more fully comprehended in this century. The suburbs of London are greatly enlarged every way, from the great increase of the commerce of England. Legal interest of money is reduced. The revenue of England is vastly increased, as is also its royal navy and mercantile shipping, and likewise all its manufactures. New English plantations are formed in America, and the old ones much improved. Money banking takes its original establishment and increase in England, and commercial liberty is also legally and firmly established there; and almost every part of Christendom, towards the close of this century, is endeavouring to push into commerce and manufactures; whilst, at the same time, the commerce and shipping of England continue very visibly to prosper and increase."

In filling in some of the details of this glowing sketch, we have to notice that, in the first year of the seventeenth century, a charter was granted to the East India Company, by the title of "The Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East Indies." The first governor was the Earl of Cumberland, and the company consisted of 215 knights, aldermen, and merchants. Their first fleet to India was sent out in 1601, and on the return voyage possession was taken by them of the island of St. Helena, which has proved a most

valuable intermediate harbour for the ships to call at. This direct opening of the trade with India was at first strongly opposed, as the more ready introduction of the manufactured products of the East was considered injurious to the home manufactures, and in after years the East India House was mobbed and the property of the company destroyed by infuriated artizans.



FIRST EAST INDIA HOUSE.

No permanent English settlement had been made on the shores of North America, discovered by Sebastian Cabot and other English voyagers, until the beginning of the seventeenth century, when colonies of Englishmen began to be established in Virginia and in those parts of the west, known as Pennsylvania, New York, and New England. In 1606, two companies were formed for colonizing those districts of North America, one of which was called the Company of London Adventurers, and the other the Company of Plymouth Adventurers. The more northern regions of America were also colonized by the Hudson's Bay Company, for trading in furs. These settlements of the English were not recognized by Spain, who claimed the right to occupy the whole of the continent of America, and it was not until

1667 that the title of England to occupy those parts of the country then colonized by Englishmen was admitted. The importance which the American colonies assumed towards the close of the century induced William III. to issue a commission, in 1696, for regulating trade and plantations, which was the actual commencement of the management of the affairs of trade and of the colonies, by separate departments of the Government. A council of trade had, indeed, been appointed by Cromwell, at the head of which he placed his son Richard, but it did nothing, and had no result.

Notwithstanding the generally prosperous condition of manufactures and commerce during the seventeenth century, there were some years of depression, and, in the reign of James I., a commission was appointed to inquire into the cause of the decay of trade. Among other matters set down for inquiry were—"Why wool has fallen in price? How to prevent the exportation of wool? How far companies of merchants may or may not be a cramp on trade, as many do allege? How to remove the scarcity of money?" etc. The last question King James undertook to solve without inquiry, by issuing a proclamation prohibiting the exportation of gold and silver, and restricting the use of the precious metals in manufactures.

The coinage of the kingdom underwent many changes during the period we are now reviewing. During the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII. the coin was greatly deteriorated in value, for the purpose of thereby supplying the demands on the king's treasury, caused by his extravagance. This plan of deteriorating the coin was carried to such extent in the last year of his reign, that he coined money which contained only four ounces of silver to eight ounces of alloy. This attempt to give fictitious value to the precious metals necessarily failed; for, in all transactions at home as well as abroad, the quantity of goods given in exchange for coin will always be proportioned to its intrinsic value, and the effect of deterioration, as soon as it is known, is to increase the nominal price. These royal attempts to cheat have often been resorted to by sovereigns in difficulties, reckless of the fluctuations and derangements in all commercial transactions which such tamperings with the currency invariably produce. The following statement of the gold and silver coinage, from 1558 to 1659, is given by Dr. Davenant, in his "New Dialogues on the Posture of Affairs," taken from the registers of the Royal Mint:—

	GOLD.	SILVER.
Elizabeth .....	£1,200,000	£4,632,932
James I. ....	800,000	1,700,000
Charles I. ....	1,723,000	8,776,000
Cromwell .....		1,000,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£3,723,000	£16,108,932

The total amount coined within that period was, therefore, £19,831,932, but it is calculated by Dr. Davenant that the coin actually circulating in 1600 did not exceed £4,000,000 sterling, and that it had increased in 1711 to £12,000,000.

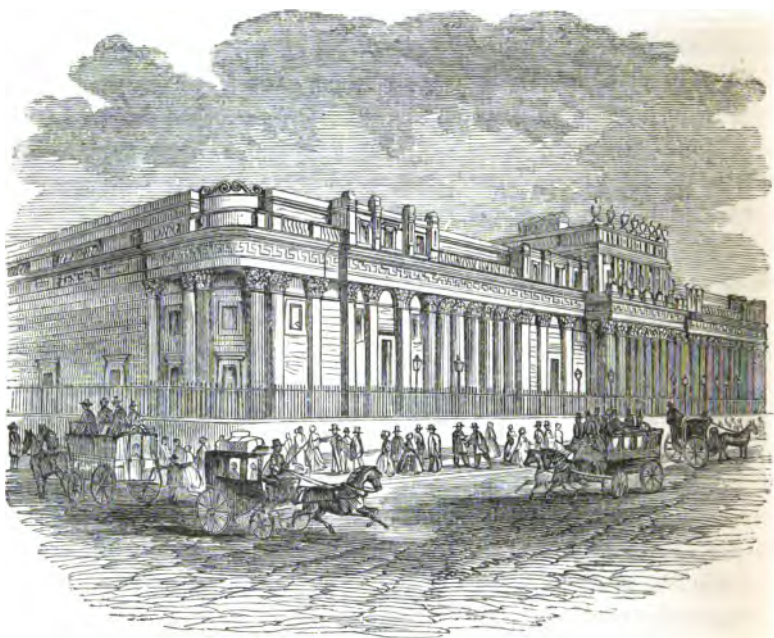
The practice of insuring merchandise against losses at sea was adopted in England in the middle of the sixteenth century. Guicciardini, in his "History of the Netherlands," says, "the merchants on both sides have fallen into a way of insuring their merchandise from losses at sea, by a joint contribution." This is the first notice of the insurance of ships in England, but an Act passed in the forty-third year of Elizabeth, appointing commissioners to hear and determine the practice of insuring merchandise, mentions it as having been done "time out of mind." These assurances were then usually effected in the "pawn-house" in Lombard Street, where the merchants assembled before the Royal Exchange was built.

The laws relating to usury underwent several changes during this period. Previous to 1546 it was unlawful to lend money at interest on any terms, the prohibition having been founded on a belief that it was forbidden in the Bible; but in that year a law was passed, in which the lending of money was indirectly sanctioned, as it was enacted that the interest on money should not exceed 10 per cent. Six years afterwards that law was repealed, and the lending of money at interest was strictly prohibited. In the reign of Elizabeth the former law was re-enacted, the rate of interest being again fixed at 10 per cent. In 1624, the rate was reduced to 8 per cent., and in that Act the word "interest" was, for the first time, applied to money-lending instead of usury. A further reduction of the rate of interest to 6 per cent. took place in 1651.

The Jews, who have ever been the chief money-lenders of the world, obtained permission, in 1655, to settle again in England, whence they had been expelled by Edward I., 365 years before. This measure was strongly opposed by the religious bigots of the day, though many

Jews had continued to reside in England on sufferance during their legal expulsion; and when the practice of money-lending became sanctioned by law, it seemed only a fitting accompaniment to countenance the money-lenders.

A law passed in the thirty-fourth year of Hénry VIII. shows that commercial failures had then become so numerous as to render it necessary to regulate the affairs of bankrupts. The Lord Chancellor and other officers were appointed "to take control of bankrupts' bodies, lands, and goods, for the payment of their debts." In Elizabeth's reign a new Act was passed on the subject, which, after complaining in the preamble of the great increase of commercial failures, explained who are properly bankrupts, and placed the methods of proceeding in bankruptcy nearly on the same footing as they existed till the recent amendments in the bankrupt law.



THE BANK OF ENGLAND.

Public banks for the deposit of money, for discounting bills, and for the issue of notes had been established at Antwerp, Amsterdam, and other great commercial cities in Europe, many years before the



banking system was introduced into England. Banks seem at the present day so essential to the transaction of business, that it is difficult to conceive how the merchants and large traders continued to manage without that accommodation. The Mint in the Tower had, indeed, been used by merchants as a place of deposit, but an enforced loan of the money by King Charles I., in 1640, destroyed confidence in the royal custody. Five years afterwards the merchants consented to deposit their cash with the Goldsmiths' Company, in Lombard Street; and that was the origin of banking in England. In 1694 the Bank of England was established, by charter granted by William and Mary, to a company who had lent the Government £1,200,000, for which the Bank was empowered to charge 8 per cent. interest. That loan was the commencement of the public debt of England. The transactions of the Bank of England now became extensive, and in 1778 the notes issued by that establishment amounted to £7,440,350. The issues have since increased to eighteen millions.

The encouragement of mercantile shipping had been, from the earliest times, an object of attention to the kings of England, and various royal edicts and proclamations were issued for that purpose, but it was not until 1651 that the first navigation law was passed. That statute, which was re-enacted with more stringent provisions in 1660, was directed principally against the Dutch, who had obtained the chief part of the carrying trade. It prohibited all exports to, and imports from, the colonies except in English ships, under penalty of the forfeiture of the ships and goods. None but subjects of the king were allowed to be factors or merchants in the English colonies, and the Act also prohibited the shipping of sugar, tobacco, cotton, wool, indigo, ginger, or dye woods, to any port out of England.

Very opposite opinions were entertained at that time, and continue to prevail to a more limited extent, as to the policy of those exclusive laws. Anderson, whose "History of Commerce" we have often referred to, strongly approves of the measure as a necessary protection to English shipping against foreign innovation; but soon after the passing of the law, when the views of commercial policy were generally very contracted, there were not wanting writers who condemned the monopoly it gave to English shipowners as injurious to commerce, by raising the price of freights, and consequently enhancing the price of colonial produce. It was stated by Roger Coke, in his "Treatise on Trade," published in 1671, that this country had then lost the greater part of

its Baltic and Greenland trades, owing to the operation of the law. According to the enlightened views now taken of commercial transactions, all restrictions of the kind are injurious; and the great increase in our commercial navy since the repeal of the navigation law in 1825, has proved the fallacy of the predictions then made, that the removal of protection would be the ruin of the shipping of Great Britain.

Towards the close of the seventeenth century there was a strong feeling manifested among the public and in Parliament at the state of the commercial relations with France, the imports from that country having, in 1675, exceeded the exports in the proportion of one million and a half to £170,000. The feeling of animosity was strengthened three years afterwards by the imposition of a heavy duty on all English commodities imported into France, and the merchants petitioned Parliament on the subject. Thereupon a resolution was passed, "that the trade of France is detrimental to the kingdom," and it was followed by a statute prohibiting, for three years, the importation of all French commodities whatever. Charles II. strongly objected to the passing of the Act, but the popular feeling was so strongly excited that he was compelled to give way. Ten years previously to this act of retaliation, a duty of sixpence per quart had been laid on French wines, and of fourpence per quart on Spanish wines. Yet after the new duties had been imposed, French wines were ordered to be sold for 2s. the bottle, and Spanish wines for 1s.; the previous prices having been 1s. 6d. and 8d.

Among the laws for facilitating mercantile transactions which came into operation towards the close of the seventeenth century was an Act for settling disputes by arbitration, and another for protesting bills of exchange when not paid within three days from the time specified. Both these laws have proved of great service; but the former, which was intended to expedite and cheapen law proceedings, not unfrequently causes great expense and delay. One case, within our knowledge, which was recently settled by arbitration, occupied twenty-six days in hearing, and cost the parties upwards of £4000.

Numerous attempts were made, not only during the period we are now considering, but in earlier times, to encourage the fishing trade, for which purpose a general herring-fishing company was established in 1654, and the Greenland company was formed in 1693; but those branches of trade, though important as a nursery for seamen, did not succeed commercially, and it was found necessary to offer bounties for

the purpose of maintaining them. The fisheries, though thus unprofitable on a large scale, were, nevertheless, the subject of frequent contention with foreign nations, and the settlement of the rights to fishing has continued to be a fruitful source of dispute even to the present time. During the thirteenth century the contentions on this account between the English and Flemings became so violent that in 1274 the Flemings attacked the English fishermen and killed 1200 of them.

Bristol, Hull, Newcastle, and even York, are often mentioned in the earlier chronicles of the kingdom, as ports where much of the shipping trade was conducted; but it is not until the middle of the seventeenth century that Liverpool comes into notice. It is mentioned as having had some trade with the West Indies in 1670, the extent of which must have been very small, for the first dock was not completed till the end



LIVERPOOL IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

of the century. The number of inhabitants in Liverpool at that time was about 5700, and the ships belonging to the port only numbered sixty.

The rapid increase in the customs' duties during this period affords substantial proof of the commercial prosperity of the country. At the

commencement of the reign of Queen Elizabeth the customs were farmed for £14,000; but in 1590 they produced nearly quadruple that amount. In 1622 the customs' duties produced £168,220, which sum was raised in 1665 to £510,000; the receipts fell during the year of the great fire of London to £303,766; but in 1680 they had increased to £440,232; in 1688 they were £781,987; and in 1709 the customs amounted to £2,319,320—a sum one hundred and sixty times greater than they produced in the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth.

The rapid increase of wealth and luxury during the latter half of the seventeenth century is strongly represented by Sir Josiah Child in his "Observations Concerning Trade," published in 1669. He states that in 1688 there were on the Exchange more men worth £10,000, than there were in 1650 worth £1000; that £500 was, in the latter period, considered a larger portion to bestow on a daughter on her marriage than £2000 in the former; that gentlewomen in 1650 thought themselves well dressed in a serge gown that a chambermaid would be ashamed to appear in at the end of the century; and that besides the great increase of rich clothes, jewels, plate, and household furniture, the number of private coaches was increased a hundred-fold.

The commerce of Scotland during the early portion of this period continued very backward compared with the progress of England. A restrictive commercial policy cramped the energies of trade. Laws were passed in the middle of the sixteenth century, prohibiting all but freemen of the royal burghs from engaging in trade; and no one was allowed to commence business unless he possessed a stated quantity of money and goods. Foreign commerce was further restricted by a statute, purporting to be for the protection of merchandise and shipping, forbidding voyages to be made during the three winter months. Leith had risen to be a port of some consequence in 1554, but the low condition of trade, even eighty years later, is indicated by another enactment that limited all trading to towns. After the union of the crowns of England and Scotland, on the accession of James I., Scotland made rapid strides in her manufactures and commerce, and followed closely in all her commercial regulations the example of England. The consolidation of the two kingdoms at the commencement of the eighteenth century put an end to the separate history of Scotland, which thenceforth became an integral part of the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES.

THE preceding sketch of the progress of commerce to the end of the seventeenth century exhibits the gradual development of trade at the time the manufactures and shipping of this country were struggling to equal those of the commercial nations on the Continent; but in the period we are now entering, the commerce of Great Britain, like her manufactures, having attained equality, rose far above all rivalry, and this country became supreme in manufacturing skill and industry, and in commercial enterprise, not only over any one nation, but over all other countries in the world combined.

As commerce is the handmaid of manufactures, the great improvements in the industrial arts, noticed in the preceding section as having taken place within the last and especially in the present century, were followed, almost as a matter of course, by corresponding extensions in commercial transactions at home and abroad. Our merchants having been enabled to sell the manufactured goods of this country of a better quality and at a lower price, the demand for them consequently increased, and in exchange for those commodities they brought home a greater quantity of foreign produce, or the equivalent value in money.

It had been an established maxim, that trade could be most advantageously carried on with a poor country that had no manufactures to sell in exchange for our goods; therefore it was supposed that the interests of commerce were best promoted by impoverishing other manufacturing nations. But a more enlarged view of commercial policy now shows that trade can be most profitably carried on with rich and prosperous countries, and the contracted opinion generally entertained, until a recent date, that the trade with any country is either favourable or the contrary, according to the excess of exports above imports, is rapidly giving place to more liberal ideas respecting the advantages and regulations of commerce.

The growing importance of the British colonies in North America and in the West Indies is the most distinguishing feature in the commercial history of this country in the eighteenth century, and in the present a new world has sprung into existence at the antipodes, peopled by adventurous and enterprising emigrants, which opens a boundless

space for the extension of our commerce, and contains stores of metallic treasures almost realizing those of the fabled El Dorado. Our commerce with those distant regions is now incomparably greater than the whole amount of our traffic with European nations at the commencement of this period; but commercial intercourse with the Continent and the home trade have expanded in a proportionate degree, so that the tonnage of the mercantile navy of Great Britain, which, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, was vauntingly stated to be 270,000 tons, had increased in 1750 to 600,000 tons; at the end of the century it amounted to 1,600,000 tons, whilst at the present time it is estimated to exceed 4,500,000. To trace the various steps by which the commerce of this country has advanced to such prodigious magnitude, and to notice all the vicissitudes it has undergone, and the various causes that have contributed to its vast development, would require an ample volume instead of the brief space that can be devoted to the subject in this general history of the progress of Great Britain; we must, therefore, content ourselves with pointing out the most remarkable characteristics.

Though the current of trade was directed principally westward after the middle of the eighteenth century, the East Indies continued, in the early part of that century, to attract most attention. A new company that had been chartered by King William to trade thither, on condition of lending the Government two millions sterling, inundated the Indies with English manufactures, and caused great embarrassment; but the old and the new company united in 1708, and by their combined operations they obtained a large accession of territory, and founded our Indian empire. The frequent extension of the Company's possessions and their occupation by the Company's servants greatly enlarged the traffic with the East, and the East India Company became the most opulent trading community that the world had ever seen. Their ships were the largest merchantmen that sailed on the ocean, their docks were of enormous size and were crowded with shipping, and many of their merchants acquired princely fortunes. At the commencement of the reign of George III. the exports of the Company amounted to £845,797, and their imports were nearly equal to them. The trade continued to increase at a rapid rate, and at the end of the century the exports and imports of the East India Company amounted to £11,699,000.

The charter of the Company having expired in 1813, the trade was

thrown open, except to China, and numbers of merchants who wished to participate in the wealth of the Indian trade glutted the markets with goods, and in their eagerness for gain many of them suffered severe losses and ruin. The experience thus obtained soon regulated the supply to the demand, and the beneficial effects of throwing open the commerce to the East Indies showed itself in a greatly extended traffic, the shipments to India becoming doubled within the first fourteen years that the trade was opened. The private merchants pursued their advantage so energetically, that they gradually drove the Company out



EAST INDIA IMPORT DOCKS.

of the market; and on the renewal of the charter in 1833, not only was their monopoly of the trade with China destroyed, but the Company were prevented from carrying on any mercantile operations whatever.

The constant flow of emigration to the settlements in North America, and the active enterprise and industry of the settlers, rendered those colonies so prosperous that, before the middle of the eighteenth century, their trade became of great importance. The colonial possessions of England excited the jealousy of her Continental rivals, as it was imagined that the greatness of this country was dependent on

her colonies. France, therefore, entered eagerly into the quarrel between England and her colonies in North America, in the expectation that, by depriving her of those possessions, the glory and prosperity of this country would depart. Holland also, stimulated by the same motive, joined the enemies of England. The result completely falsified their anticipations, for, within ten years after the independence of the United States had been recognized, our trade with that Government became greater than it had ever been; whilst the seeds of republicanism sown in France by the soldiers who had taken part in the War of Independence sprang up and ripened into a devastating revolution, by which the trade of that country was for a long time destroyed, and Holland was ravaged, and its separate existence as a nation all but expunged from the map of Europe.

The trade to the United States received great additional impulse from the cotton manufacture, and when, by the aid of machinery, the various productions from that fibre were multiplied, improved, and cheapened, the commerce not only with America, but with all parts of the known world, became expanded far beyond the reach of any previous calculations.

The official amount of the imports of cotton wool during the year ended in May, 1859, was upwards of £28,000,000, nearly the whole of which was increased in value by the various processes of manufacture to which it was subjected from three-fold to five hundred. The exports of those manufactures during the last year amounted to not less than forty-four millions sterling. Though the principal increase of the commerce of Great Britain from the beginning of the nineteenth century is attributable to the improvements in the cotton manufacture, the improvements in all other branches of manufacturing industry contributed largely to fill up the measure of our commercial prosperity.

The returns of the exports and imports in the last century present, within the briefest space, the best evidence of the progress of commerce during that period. In 1714, the last year of the reign of Queen Anne, the estimated value of the exports of England was £8,008,063. There was no increase from that year till 1738, when an augmentation of two millions occurred. During the three years of war that then ensued, there was a decrease to £8,870,499. Ten years later the exports amounted to £12,599,112; but from that point they again declined, and in 1757 they were reduced to £11,708,550. In 1760 the exports reached £15,781,290, and in 1774 they attained the amount of



£17,128,029; after which there was a fall for several years during the American war. Thus, in 1779, the value of the exports had declined to £14,857,697; in 1778, the French having then joined the Americans, the exports fell to £12,253,995; and when, in 1781, the Dutch also became our enemies, the exports were reduced to £11,342,296. That was the lowest point of depression. Commerce revived rapidly after the conclusion of peace with the United States in 1783, and in 1792 the exports from this country amounted to £24,905,200, and the imports to £19,659,388. They then went on increasing with accelerated speed till, in 1796, the official returns of the exports were £30,518,913, and of the imports £23,187,319; and in 1800 they amounted respectively to £43,152,819, and £30,570,605, at least six times the value of the exports and imports at the commencement of the eighteenth century.

The increased traffic of the last century, great as it really was, dwindles into insignificance when compared with the magnitude of commercial transactions at the present time. From forty-three millions sterling, the estimated value of the exports in 1800, they have advanced to upwards of one hundred and twenty millions, and the imports to eighty millions sterling, not including bullion, of which, in the course of five months, the amount imported was £14,550,201, and there was exported £15,506,581.

It is interesting to note the progress and fluctuations that have taken place during the last one hundred and fifty years in the trade with the countries that contribute to form the large aggregate result of exports and imports. It has already been stated that the trade with the United States of North America was greater ten years after their final separation than it was before, the values of the exports in 1774 having been £2,902,619. In 1792, the exports had risen to £4,271,418, and at the close of the century they amounted to £6,885,500. At the present time the declared value of the goods exported to the United States amounts to upwards of £18,000,000 sterling, and the computed value of the imports is £26,000,000, of which sum about £20,000,000 consist of raw cotton. There was also imported from the United States, including California, during the five months ended on the 31st of May, 1859, £2,598,224, in bullion, which is less than the average of the preceding year, therefore the annual import of bullion from the United States may be computed at not less than £7,000,000 sterling. The quantity of bullion imported from Mexico-

South America, and the West Indies, was about equal to that from the United States. In the last year the general importations from the States were below the average; for the quantity of corn, which usually constitutes an important item, was reduced to a *minimum*.

The East India trade exhibits a larger proportionate increase than that of the United States. The exports to that country, in 1741, amounted to only £147,944; but in 1769, when a new charter was granted to the company, they were bound to export annually not less than £380,837 in goods, that having been the average amount for the three preceding years. In 1792 the exports amounted to £2,425,000; and at the present time the declared value of the exported goods to India exceeds £19,000,000 sterling, and the yearly imports are computed to amount to £22,000,000. The number of pounds of tea imported by the Company, in 1779, was four millions and a-half, and the present average annual importation exceeds sixty-two millions of pounds. The value of the bullion exported from this country to the East Indies and China, in the five months ended in May last, amounted to the enormous sum of £8,113,160, nearly the whole of which was silver, but that amount is much more than the average quantity, for in the corresponding period of 1858 the value of the bullion exported was £2,221,254.

The trade between England and Ireland was scarcely taken any account of before 1626, in which year there were imported from Ireland 449 *tons of iron*—an article that has long since ceased to be produced there in any quantity, and which Ireland now receives almost entirely from this country. In 1782, the trade had increased so greatly that the exports amounted to £3,102,938, and the imports to £2,748,293. At that period the Irish trade remained nearly stationary till the end of the century; but at the present time the number of tons of goods transferred from one country to the other is more than double the pounds in value which then represented the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland, the tonnage of British vessels entered inwards and cleared outwards being about six millions of tons each way.

In noting the progress and fluctuations of commerce, there is no instance of such rapid advancement as that exhibited in Australia. In 1792 the trade with "New Holland," as that continental island was then called, was represented by imports amounting to £114, and its exports were not more than £11,940. To that part of the world

we now annually send goods exceeding in value £7,000,000 sterling, and we receive about £12,000,000 of gold, besides large quantities of wool, copper, and other produce. This change in our commercial relations with Australia has been principally produced within the marvellously short period of eight years; gold not having been discovered there till 1851. The progress that has been wrought in the trade with "New Holland" contrasts strongly with the change that has taken place in the commerce with the country from which its original name was derived. Holland, at the beginning of the last century, was the centre of all our foreign trade; it has now sunk into comparative insignificance. As other instances of fluctuations in the course of trade, it may be noticed that, in 1733, England supplied France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy with 800,000 quarters of corn; and that, in 1748, the produce of sugar from the French West India islands was nearly double the quantity produced in the West India islands in possession of England.

The shipping of this country increased in at least an equal degree to her trade during this period. At the commencement of 1853 the total number of British ships, including those of the colonies, consisted of 31,993 sailing vessels and 1414 steam vessels; the tonnage of the former being 4,085,385, and that of the steamers 223,616 tons. Of these ships, by far the larger proportion are engaged in the coasting trade; and it appears, by the accounts relating to trade and navigation, presented to Parliament in June last, that the number of British ships employed in the Irish and coasting trades, during the five months ended May, 1859, was 122,961, with 11,067,999 tonnage; the number so employed in any one month having averaged 27,800, cleared and entered. The British ships engaged in foreign trade, which entered inwards and cleared outwards, during the same period of five months, including their repeated voyages, were 16,378, with a tonnage of 4,380,952 tons. The foreign ships so engaged numbered 11,730; and their tonnage amounted to 2,614,942 tons.

The shipping ports of the kingdom participated fully in the general increase of commerce. Of London it is scarcely necessary to speak, since it has been intimately associated with the history of trade from the commencement of this section. The numerous and capacious docks, filled with ships from all parts of the world, and the forests of masts seen on its noble river, are ever-present witnesses of its greatness and prosperity. It is almost impossible to conceive that four hundred years

ago the only shipping wharf in the Thames was Billingsgate. Liverpool, which has been already mentioned as a small fishing town, in the middle of the seventeenth century, began to assume importance as the trade with America and with the West Indies increased. In 1709 the number of ships that frequented the port was 350, and in that year Liverpool entered into rivalry with Bristol in the infamous slave trade. The customs' duties were then next in amount to those of London and Bristol, yet, so slowly did the internal improvements keep pace with the shipping, that in 1750 no stage-coach ran nearer to Liverpool than Warrington, and the town could not boast of more than one private carriage. Before the middle of the eighteenth century Liverpool had surpassed Bristol in the number and importance of its shipping; the ships that entered the former port having been twice as many as those that entered Bristol, and it now exceeds even London in the number of the ships that enter and leave its port for foreign parts.



THE DOCKS AT HULL.

The port of Hull, on the opposite coast, being conveniently situated

for trading with Russia, Sweden, Norway, Holland, and Germany, soon engrossed the larger share of the traffic with those countries. In 1778 the Old Dock was first opened, and several other capacious docks have since been successively constructed round the town to accommodate its growing commerce.

The comparative importance of the four ports above mentioned may be estimated by the number and tonnage of the ships that entered each in 1852. The total number of vessels that entered the port of London, including foreign, Irish, coasters, and colliers, was 38,150, and the tonnage amounted to 7,063,301. Of that number there were employed in the foreign trade 6,028 British ships, tonnage 1,389,711; and 3,958 foreign ships, tonnage 770,446. Into Liverpool there entered 4,186 ships, with a tonnage of 1,847,629 tons; of which number 2,718 were British. The number of coasters amounted to about 10,000, half of which were engaged in the Irish trade. The number of vessels that entered Bristol was 649, and 6,614 coasters, the tonnage amounting together to 579,996. Into Hull the tonnage of ships entered was 799,866.

Newcastle, Sunderland, Leith, and Glasgow, in the north, and Southampton, Portsmouth, and Plymouth in the south, together with innumerable other ports round the coast, attest the proud pre-eminence of the mercantile shipping and of the naval power of Great Britain.

The attainment of this unprecedented state of commercial prosperity was accompanied by many fluctuations and drawbacks, occasioned by wars, by dearth, and by reckless speculation, which retarded its progress for a time, but could not stop the onward current. During the far greater portion of the eighteenth century England was engaged in foreign wars, or was disturbed by internal rebellion, and nothing but the persevering industry of the people, guided by skill and undaunted enterprise, could have supported the nation in those times of trial. The drains of men and money to supply the waste of war, the frequent loans and increasing taxation to meet the increased expenditure; the constantly unsettled state of foreign relations; and the internal convulsions caused by the disputed succession to the throne, though they seriously checked the progress of trade they did not materially diminish it, and at every interval of peace and tranquillity manufactures and commerce revived, and proceeded buoyantly on their course. The reduction of interest, in the

reign of George I., to 8 per cent., by rendering money abundant, afforded great encouragement to trade, but it tended also to generate unsound speculations, thereby disturbing the regular course of commercial transactions and involving many in ruin. This speculative mania culminated in 1720 in the disastrous South Sea scheme, the consequences of which were severely felt for a long time afterwards. Wars upon wars continued to drain the country of its wealth from 1737 to 1748. In 1757 a dearth of corn aggravated the sufferings of the people, other continental wars succeeded, and then came the still more formidable war with the North American colonies, which ended in the severance of the United States from this kingdom. In 1792 a commercial convulsion followed those political disturbances, and credit was destroyed. In one month there were the extraordinary number of 209 bankruptcies, announced at a period when about 500 in the year was the greatest usual number. This commercial storm was scarcely tranquillized when the terrible wars of the French Revolution commenced, and continued with but little intermission for twenty-two years.

In the meantime the credit of the Bank of England had been shaken, and cash payments were suspended. Dearth of corn in 1805 and in 1810 raised the price of wheat to 112 shillings the quarter; and in the latter year a commercial panic, even more disastrous than that of 1792, caused the failure of nearly half the traders in England. The lowering of prices, by the transition from war to a state of peace in 1816, again threw a deep gloom over the prospects of commerce, and after that time of suffering and distress several years elapsed before full advantage could be taken of restored peace. With the return of confidence and the abundance of money, reckless speculation again ran riot, and even the mad delusion of the South Sea scheme did not exceed the railway mania of 1847, nor was less ruinous in its consequences. Within the last three years another commercial crisis shook the foundations of credit, and we are even now only recovering from its depressing influence.

Many other events of less prominence than those we have mentioned occurred during this period to check the progress of commerce; yet, despite of all obstacles, we have seen how year after year the general trade of the country continued to flourish. Several circumstances, indeed, tended to compensate for the evil effects occasioned by the long wars in which this country was engaged. The supremacy

of the naval power of Great Britain gave her the command of traffic by sea, and when the trade with South America was opened, in 1808, by the transference of the government of Portugal to the Brazils, and by the emancipation of the Spanish colonies, the advantages of it were almost monopolized by our shipping. The expansion of the paper currency came opportunely in aid of commercial transactions, and the great extension of the British dominions by conquests in the East Indies, by the cession of Canada, and by the seizure of the insular colonial possessions of France, Spain, and Holland, opened fresh markets for our manufactures; whilst the increased facilities of intercourse afforded by steam navigation and railways added materially to the prosperity of trade and manufactures. Nor must we omit to mention, as an important element in the present prosperous condition of commerce, the discovery of the gold-fields of California and of Australia, which has had the effect of raising prices and wages from 12 to 35 per cent.,\* of encouraging emigration, and of adding largely to the demand for manufactures.

In the earlier portion of the period, the plan of encouraging certain branches of trade and manufactures by bounties continued to be practised. In 1721 Parliament passed an Act granting bounties on the exportation of silks, ribbons, and other goods, in which the English could not compete abroad with the foreign manufacturers; and by the same Act the duties, which had been previously payable on the exportation of British produce, were removed. Both measures were equally well intended, but whilst the latter accords with the enlightened principles of commercial policy now generally approved, the granting of bounties is a very questionable means of encouraging the manufactures and commerce of the country. The prejudicial effects of bounties were strikingly shown in the unsuccessful attempts to encourage the herring fishery, by the Society for the Free British Fishery, established in 1749. A tonnage bounty of 50*s.* was granted to the company, and the result was, that the sum of £159 7*s.* 6*d.* was paid as bounty on every barrel of herrings produced.†

In 1772 the old prejudice against “engrossing” and “forestalling” gave way, and an Act was passed for repealing the laws against the purchase of corn and other commodities on their way to market. This relaxation of the stringent regulations against the purchase of

\* M'Culloch's "Commercial Dictionary," Article, "Precious Metals."

† M'Culloch's "Statistics of the British Empire."

produce from manufacturers and farmers, to sell again, removed a very irksome restriction on trading, for if the law had been rigidly enforced it would have been a most serious hindrance to the home trade in all its branches.

Previous to 1803 the duties on foreign goods imported were payable either when unloaded from the ships, or a bond with security was given for the payment. Merchants were thus compelled to have a large sum of money sunk in the commodities stored in their warehouses beyond their actual value; and they were often obliged to sell at disadvantage to obtain a return of the duties. An attempt had been made by Sir Robert Walpole, in his excise scheme, in 1773, to remove the inconvenience by providing Government warehouses wherein tobacco and spirits could be deposited without paying the import duty until they were sold. A strong prejudice was, however, entertained by the merchants against the measure, as it was thought to be an attempt to introduce a universal system of excise, and it was consequently abandoned. In 1803 the plan was proposed in a less objectionable form, and has since been carried into operation with great advantage. There are now bonding warehouses at all the principal ports of the kingdom, where large quantities of goods are deposited under Government lock till they are cleared for home consumption, or they may be re-exported without paying any duty. By this arrangement our ports have become convenient *entrepôts* for foreign commodities, and a new and important traffic has been thus established. Those who have visited the vaults of the London Docks, and seen the immense number of casks of wine stored there in bond, may form an idea of the great importance of the warehousing system, as regards that article of import. The total quantity of wine and spirits in bond on the 1st of June last, amounted to no less than 18,635,753 gallons; of tobacco in bond there were 42,085,197 lbs.; of tea, 68,414,808 lbs.; of sugar, 1,786,105 cwts.; of coffee, 15,895,991 lbs.; and there were 6,463,589 lbs. of spices, in addition to a large number of other articles chargeable with customs' duties.

The relaxation of the navigation laws in 1821 and 1825 by Mr. Huskisson was a bold attack on popular prejudices, and the measure met with strenuous opposition from the shipping interest and in Parliament, as it was supposed that the superior advantages foreign ship-builders possess in timber and in the cheapness of labour, would enable them to surpass this country, and that our ports would be filled with



foreign shipping. The preceding statements of the relative numbers of British and foreign ships show the groundlessness of such apprehensions. In 1850 the Government extended the same principle to the coasting trade, which had not been included in the previous measures, and in 1854 several other restrictions on mercantile navigation were abandoned.

The more liberal views of commercial policy, adopted in regard to the navigation laws, and advocated generally by Mr. Huskisson and Sir Robert Peel, and by many others of our legislators and intelligent writers, prepared the public mind for the abandonment of the system of protection by which our foreign trade was hampered. When the manufactures of Great Britain became superior and cheaper than those of the Continent, it was absurd to impose restrictions on the importation of goods which could not compete with ours even in foreign markets, and with respect to those articles of taste and luxury, in the production of which foreign countries continued to surpass us, their prohibition or restricted use, by the imposition of high duties, had been shown by experience to be opposed to the best interests of the country and prejudicial even to the progress and improvement of the manufactures which such protective duties were intended to encourage. Several modifications of the tariff of customs' duties had been made in the course of the century, and in 1845 Sir Robert Peel brought forward his liberal and comprehensive scheme, by which the system of protection was virtually abandoned, and the advantages of free trade were recognized. By that measure the duties on 420 different articles were either abolished or reduced, and most of those that were continued were avowed to be retained for the purposes of revenue and not of protection.

In the following year the same able statesman introduced the bill for the repeal of the corn laws, which was passed in 1846, and on the 1st of February, 1849, that measure came into full operation. Free trade in corn and in provisions, instead of being the ruin of the farmers as apprehended, has proved highly beneficial to them, and the agricultural interest is now much more prosperous than it was during the time of protection.

We have endeavoured, in the preceding pages, to mark succinctly and clearly the principal steps by which the trade of this kingdom has advanced to its present unequalled prosperity. It has progressed hand-in-hand with the improvements and extension of manufactures, and though by the operations of commerce commodities are merely ex-

changed, it exercises an important influence on production, by increasing the facilities for disposing of the produce of manufacturing industry, which without its aid would lie dormant and stagnate. It is commerce that gives vitality to industrial enterprise, and now that its principles are better understood, and the restraints on its action are, for the most part, removed, we may confidently anticipate its continued and accelerated progress.

We cannot better conclude this section than in the words of Mr. M'Culloch:—"It would be difficult to exaggerate the advance that has been made in commerce and in most sorts of industry, and the improvement in the condition of society, that has taken place during the last seven years. A considerable portion of this advance is no doubt due to the discovery of the Californian and Australian gold-fields. But that was an incident which might have been turned to an equally good account by France, Spain, or any other country. And if it has been peculiarly advantageous to us and to the Americans, it is because our transatlantic rivals and ourselves were in a situation to profit by it; because our free and untrammelled energies were ready to be directed towards any channel, how remote soever, which held out the promise of adequate reward. The moral influence of the new state of things is no less powerful and important than its economical influence. The extension of commerce will do more than anything else to diffuse the blessings of civilization, to bind together the universal society of nations, by sharpening, and at the same time gratifying, their mutual wants and desires, and to maintain that tranquillity so indispensable to its full development."\*

\* "Commercial Dictionary," 1856.





CAXTON'S FIRST SHEET PRINTED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

# PROGRESS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

## CHAPTER I.

### BEFORE THE REFORMATION.



If there be one formula continually heard from the lips of Englishmen, which no amount of use or familiarity seems to weaken, or make less dear, surely it is that which we express by the words—Religious and Civil Liberty. And no wonder! It is just what they convey that makes the difference between our own country and so many other countries about us. We have had to learn the truths they inculcate in a stern school; where the hours have been ages;

the teachers, war, and strife, and revolution, and sorrow, and pain, and martyrdom; and it is natural, therefore, that as we pause, and feel the benefits of the discipline we have passed through, or as we look around, with the calm consciousness of strength and matured conviction, upon the struggles of other and less advanced communities, that we

should hold fast in our very heart of hearts to the principles that have proved of such inestimable value.

To trace the steps of this progress must, therefore, be a matter of the deepest interest. England is now more than ever the light of the European nations; and while, for their sake, it is well that it should be so, the knowledge of such a fact imposes additional responsibility upon us—to see that the light be kept pure and brightly burning, and preserved, as was the sacred fire in the temples of an older time, with the most jealous, unsleeping vigilance.

Had we written the above sentiments a few years ago, it is not improbable that we might have concluded our introductory observations with them; content with thus plainly stating facts to which most persons would have given their unhesitating assent, but thinking ourselves, as no doubt they would have thought, that the great battle of freedom having been won, there remained for us, in effect, only to enjoy the fruits. Alas! our eyes are probably destined ere long to be opened to a full consciousness that this was, indeed, a melancholy mistake. The Chevalier Bunsen, in his recent letter to Arndt, dwells ominously on the danger to religious liberty in the present state of the world; on the prevailing uneasiness of men's minds; the despairings that many persons feel of the world's future, and which we by no means share with them; the threatening aspect of opposed religious parties; and he believes that decisive conflicts impend, preparatory to a new order of things.

No one, indeed, who marks the signs of the times, can fail to perceive the gradual but certain accumulation of vast forces, spiritual and material, and for purposes that no one can distinctly understand. Yet, day by day, the advancing and surrounding shadow seems to grow darker, and voices are heard to cry—"England, it is thou who art threatened! Beware!" But why? What is our crime? We have established the supremacy of civil law, and made it for the most part pure, just, and impartial; we have secured full toleration for all denominations of religious belief; we have loosened the slave from his fetters, and the Catholic, the Dissenter, and the Jew from their civil disabilities; we have set commerce free, so that it may use its mighty arms to bind together, in friendly relationship, the most distant lands; we are now about to begin to emancipate politically our working men; and by these, and a hundred other and kindred efforts, we are taking care to bring to fruition more of the precious truths we have

gained, and to guard against the possibility of retrogression. Precisely ! And that is our crime with kingly and spiritual despots ! However for a while nations may seem to sleep, and to lose all sense of their birthright, they will—*must*—waken at last, with such a people as the British ever bustling about, and crying to them, as with a trumpet voice—“Seest thou what it is to be free?” And that voice has been heard ! And British liberty has been seen and studied ; and our very hospitality to the exiles who have flown from the despotisms of their own native soil, has increased the facilities for obtaining such knowledge. So, at last, the causes begin to produce their natural effects. At home, in Ireland, national schemes of education, and improved laws relative to the land, are slowly but surely creating new and better influences—developing more independence of position and thought, bringing Catholic and Protestant laity to a better understanding of each other ; while, on the Continent, we know that the masses are everywhere agitated, and heaving with the same instincts and desires that have so often preceded with us great epochs of history. Can we, then, be surprised that the teachers and maintainers of the opposite creeds are alarmed, and moving eagerly to and fro, and conspiring to bring together into some vast union the whole of the strength that lies at their disposal ? Need we be astonished that they should believe they could keep their own subjects quiet, seeing how long they have done so, or at least in subjection, if they could but silence that pestilent England ? No ; and here lies at once our glory and our danger. We proselytize by example ; and must be put down. Doubtless the accidents of the day have their influence. A weak and amiable Pope—an unscrupulous and able Cardinal—a young and fanatical Emperor, bred in the faith of the divinity that does hedge in a king—or an Imperial Adventurer, whom the dower of a mighty name, and the association with a proud country’s humiliations, and thirst for redress, have enabled, with the aid of violated oaths and merciless slaughter, and of his own gloomy and unfathomable genius, to achieve a position of almost unexampled material power,—all these, singly or in combination, may have their personal influence in determining more or less quietly, or in guiding more or less far, on the chosen paths, the destinies of our time. But below all are the real currents, the irresistible moving forces, on which *they* are borne, and these are the principles represented by the battalions on either side—the two camps into which all Europe is rapidly forming

itself—of the advocates or possessors of civil and religious liberty on the one hand, and their opponents on the other; who evidently demand that the Pope alone shall show the way to heaven, while his brother, and vassal potentate, the king, shall take care of us, body and estate, while we remain on earth.

What England has thought of such questions—how she has acted when they have been practically put to her, we desire to show in the ensuing pages; and from their perusal may be drawn, we hope, tolerably safe conclusions as to how she *will* speak and act in the future, if she is driven again to make her replies. It is no new question, there is hardly even a new feature, unless it be that amid so much general light, there should exist men and creeds, and principles of action, that not only love darkness themselves, but demand that all men shall participate in their tastes. Our readers will, we think, be surprised to see even the most interesting of recent events—such as the Mortara case—are only reproductions of the olden time, ghostly apparitions that were thought to be laid at rest for ever.

Let us not be misunderstood. It so happens that one special creed—the Roman Catholic—and one special potentate—the Pope, as the head of the church—have been ranged in more or less determined hostility, at various times, to those ideas of civil and religious liberty on which the men of another creed—the Protestants—have set their hearts; and for which they have contested, until they finally triumphed. In showing these contests, and sympathizing with these triumphs, let it not for a moment be supposed we are dealing, or wishing to deal, with opinions as opinions simply, or with any creed as a creed simply. Our object, so far as we have any object other than studying the conditions on which the progress of religious liberty has depended, is the very opposite of this. We draw from such studies the strongest possible belief of the folly and the wickedness of attempts to wound or injure men, or quarrel with them in any way for opinion's sake. No body of religionists has yet established a monopoly of liberty. There have been Catholic patriots innumerable; there are liberal Catholic countries at this moment; nay, the mightiest conquests of civil and religious liberty, if gained over Catholics and their spiritual head, were gained by Catholics of unquestionable fidelity to the leading tenets of their communion. So, again, Protestants have sent Catholic martyrs to the stake, and in so doing have, we think, committed even a greater crime than they had themselves previously suffered from, because more directly violating



their own principles: their apology must be, that they did not yet comprehend, in all their force and beauty, what those principles were. No: we have nothing to do here with opinions as opinions; but if they are, unhappily, of such a nature that they must and do resolve themselves into overt acts, and those acts impair or destroy the right of individual men to live freely their own life, while so living as not to interfere with the corresponding rights of others, then opinions become facts, and must be inquired into, perhaps contested, even to the risking all we ordinarily hold most dear, as life, domestic peace, and worldly possessions. And in a word, it is of such opinions, and of their opposites, each class eternally striving to shape themselves into living law and government, that the whole history of religious progress consists.

We need not use many words to explain why we deal with the question of Religious before that of Civil Liberty. We only follow the facts in so doing. Magna Charta would probably have never existed in any form, or have been a very different kind of document, had Christianity not been introduced into Britain some centuries before; and it is quite certain that the tremendous events of the Civil War, and their final issue in the Revolution of 1688, which gave us a firm base to build upon, were impregnated to the very core, and strengthened and guided throughout, by the religious principles that had previously triumphed at the Reformation, and by the putting into the hands of the people the people's best book—the Bible.

It were a hopeless effort to try to form any distinct notions of the views or practices of men on this subject in the age of the Druids. In those vast wicker cages, wherein crowds of human beings were offered as religious sacrifices to the gods, the bulk appear to have been simply prisoners of war; but victims innocent even of that misfortune were selected, when the numbers were otherwise insufficient. Were these persons consenting, or were they arbitrarily selected by the priests? and, if so, were doubters of the truths of Druidic philosophy and religion, if any such then existed, especially looked after? Probably mind was then too inactive among the people to trouble itself with doubts of any kind; and if an intellect more than usually penetrating did arise, it would naturally seek to join the Druid class, which then monopolized all knowledge, as well as all government, civil and religious. That priestly monopoly, indeed, is the one grand fact that we learn of the state of our earliest British ancestors. And the very sacrifices we have spoken of, hideous as they

were, have been looked on, probably with justice, as a first step in civilization and religious freedom—the freedom of not being eaten as well as killed and burned, after an unlucky campaign.

If we know nothing about the liberty allowed by the Druids, we do know that none was accorded to them after the Romans had taken possession of Britain. They were mercilessly destroyed, as we have already seen, by their Roman conquerors, and these very sacrifices were the alleged ground. But there is reason to believe that motives of state policy were the true incentives. The Roman governors in this country must have found their influence nothing as compared with that of the native priesthood, which had moulded the entire British life for unknown centuries; and, apart from the personal jealousies thus arising, there might be a very natural fear that, sooner or later, there would be a national attack to destroy the foreigner; and then, if the natural *head* of the people were lost to them, their destruction would be the more easy.

It sounds odd enough to say, that among the earliest advocates of, or martyrs to, the idea of religious liberty—crude enough as yet, we acknowledge—were the men who lifted their voices in patriotic eloquence for the restoration of Druidical rule—we mean the early Bards of Wales. Yet they were right alike in their thought and their feeling. Druidism had been overthrown, not by fair contest with a higher, purer, and stronger creed; but simply by the arguments of fire and steel, and sword and spear, and by such absolute conclusions as the slaughter of the men who owned the obnoxious faith.

We get a little more light as to the Roman era in Britain. Ideas of toleration certainly existed then, as they existed at Rome itself. Gibbon tells us, that “the policy of the emperors and the senators, as far as it concerns religion, was happily seconded by the reflections of the enlightened, and by the habits of the superstitious part of their subjects; that the various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful; and that this toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord.” And Mr. Stebbing, in his “Church History,” reminds us, that “so little prejudice, in fact, had first existed at Rome respecting the character of Christ and his followers, that it is related that the Emperor Tiberius, struck with even the imperfect accounts which he had received of our Saviour, proposed to the senate to have him enrolled among the gods whom the Romans worshipped.”

But a State belief was undoubtedly the rule, and if the State saw *political* reason to interfere, no scruples as to religious liberty stopped it either in dealing most bloodily, as we have seen with the Druids, or in their similar persecution against the Christians in Britain, when Diocletian (believing they threatened all civil authority) ordered their suppression in all parts of the Roman empire. It was then the first known Christian martyr, Alban, perished. Bede tells the story interestingly, though at a greater length than we can afford space for; we omit, accordingly, some passages:—

“This Alban, being yet a pagan, at the time when the cruelties of wicked princes were raging against Christians, gave entertainment in his house to a certain clergyman flying from the persecutors. This man he observed to be engaged in continual prayer, and watching day and night; when, on a sudden, the divine grace shining on him, he began to imitate the example of faith and piety which was set before him, and being gradually instructed by his wholesome admonitions, he cast off the darkness of idolatry, and became a Christian in all sincerity of heart. The aforesaid clergyman having been some days entertained by him, it came to the ears of the wicked prince, that this holy confessor of Christ, whose time of martyrdom had not yet come, was concealed at Alban's house; whereupon he sent some soldiers to make a strict search after him. When they came to the martyr's house, St. Alban immediately presented himself to the soldiers, instead of his guest and master, in the habit of a long coat which he wore, and was led bound before the judge.

“It happened that the judge, at the time when Alban was carried before him, was standing at the altar, and offering sacrifice to devils. [Bede does not stand upon ceremony in his epithets; the Romans, as we shall see, thought them gods.] When he saw Alban, being much enraged that he should thus, of his own accord, put himself into the hands of the soldiers, and incur such danger in behalf of his guest, he commanded him to be dragged up to the images of the devils, before which he stood, saying, ‘Because you have chosen to conceal a rebellious and sacrilegious person, rather than deliver him up to the soldiers, that his contempt of the gods might meet with the penalty due to such blasphemy, you shall undergo all the punishment that was due to him, if you abandon the worship of our religion.’ But St. Alban, who had voluntarily declared himself a Christian to the persecutors of the faith, was not at all daunted at the prince's threats,

but putting on the armour of spiritual warfare, publicly declared that he would not obey the command. Then said the judge, 'Of what family or race are you?' 'What does it concern you,' answered Alban, 'of what stock I am? If you desire to hear the truth of my religion, be it known to you that I am now a Christian, and bound by Christian duties.' 'I ask your name,' said the judge; 'tell me it immediately.' 'I am called Alban by my parents,' replied he; 'and I worship and adore the true and living God, who created all things.' 'Then,' said the judge, inflamed with anger, 'if you will enjoy the happiness of eternal life, do not delay to offer sacrifice to the great gods.' Alban rejoined, 'These sacrifices, which by you are offered to devils, neither can avail the subjects, nor answer the wishes of those that offer up their supplications to them. On the contrary, whosoever shall offer sacrifice to these images, shall receive the everlasting pains of hell for his reward.'

"The judge, hearing these words, and being much incensed, ordered this holy confessor of God to be scourged by the executioners, believing he might by stripes shake that constancy of heart, on which he could not prevail by words. He, being most cruelly tortured, bore the same patiently, or rather joyfully, for our Lord's sake. When the judge perceived that he was not to be overcome by tortures, or with drawn from the exercise of the Christian religion, he ordered him to be put to death."

We spare the readers the details of the various miracles that our credulous historian believed to have accompanied the execution of the saint, whose head was struck off. So also was the head of the soldier who was to have played the executioner, but refused at the last moment. The scene of this event, an important one, we may be sure, for the future of Christianity and of religious freedom, was Verulam, now St. Albans. The particular locality was a hill "about five hundred paces from the place; adorned, or rather clothed, with all kinds of flowers, having its sides neither perpendicular nor even craggy, but sloping down in a most beautiful plain, worthy, from its lovely appearance, to be the scene of a martyr's sufferings."

This persecution ceased as suddenly as it had begun, when Diocletian abdicated; thus showing how much personal and individual feeling had to do with the whole affair. While it lasted (about two years) many Christian churches were destroyed, and multitudes of people driven into the forests and mountains, there to find, too often, a

lingering death, instead of the more speedy one with which they had been threatened.

The writer of a recent review, in "Blackwood's Magazine," of Vaughan's "Revolutions in English History," remarks very happily, "the one permanent advantage which accrued to Britain from the conquest by the Romans is precisely this—it *separated the magistrate from the priest*. The first great step in human progress is made when the priesthood become legislators, the second when they cease to be so." We obtained the first under the Druidic rule, and the second, as has been just observed, through the Romans. Possibly the Druids may have resisted this inroad of the magistrate on their power, and so have brought on themselves their own tragical end. Not that they would thus be less deserving of respect and sympathy; for how were they suddenly to understand and to appreciate the mighty change proposed, and proposed, too, by foreign invaders, apparently to disunite the people and their natural governors? But, on the other hand, the Romans knew that they were in the right in compelling this separation; and our ancestors learned before long to do full justice to their policy in this respect, as we shall yet see.

During the more regular and systematic introduction of Christianity by Augustine at the close of the sixth century, it is very interesting to note to what an extent practical toleration existed even among the followers of that terrible creed which the Saxon and Danish invaders had introduced while the Roman dominion was breaking up. The system of Woden, or Odin, is supposed to have originated with Sigge, a chieftain of a Scythian tribe, who, oppressed by the Romans under Pompey, became a martyr to liberty as regards those he left, and an enslaver of nations in the lands that he went to, and terrified by his presence. With "a breath like that of a furnace," and with "a voice still for war," he and his followers passed from the Euxine to the shores of the Baltic, where Sigge was ultimately deified as Odin, or Woden. Thence the warriors and the creed find way to England, and there they appear to have established the supremacy of their Pagan idol. Yet it is to some of these pagan kings we must look for the earliest examples of tolerance, and for the fruits that naturally spring up where this principle is thoroughly observed. King Ethelbert, for instance, was ruling as a pagan monarch, with a pagan priesthood about him, and all the other influences that say "keep things as they are, resist all innovation, punish disturbers of the peace," at the time that Augustine and the other mission-

aries came to him from Rome, begging permission to speak freely their glad tidings. But they came not as a "church militant," but, as the apostle had taught them to come, without wealth, or pomp, or force of any kind, trusting wholly to the innate power of the ideas and faith they had to give. And what was the king's reply? Nothing could be more dignified, hospitable, or wise. He had no intention, he said, of forsaking the gods of his forefathers for a new and uncertain worship; but, as the intentions of the strangers were good, and their promises inviting, they should be at liberty to instruct his people, free from interruption, and be his guests the while. And what was the result of *man* thus appealing to *man*? Why, the conversion of the king, and the transfer of the whole kingdom of Kent from Paganism to Christianity. Bede gives us another incident, still more striking in its external aspect, relative to the tolerance of those primitive ages, in connection with Redwald, king of the East Anglians:—

"Some time before his son gave up his idolatrous superstitions, Redwald had long before been admitted to the sacrament of the Christian faith in Kent, but in vain; for on his return home he was seduced by his wife and certain perverse teachers, and turned back from the sincerity of the faith; and thus his latter state was worse than the former. So that, like the ancient Samaritans, he seemed at the same time to serve Christ and the gods whom he had served before. And in the same temple he had an altar to sacrifice to Christ, and another small one to offer victims to devils; which temple, Aldwulf, king of the same province, who lived in our time, testifies had stood until his time, and that he had seen it when he was a boy."

This remarkable experiment, again, is said to have been successful. The ancient altar was gradually forsaken, and East Anglia as gradually became a Christian kingdom. Facts like these have by no means lost their significance for us, even now. The old error is for ever springing up into new activity, if for an instant we forget the lesson of the past—the error, we mean, that the superior purity of our faith is a reason for forcing it upon men of a different creed.

M. Guizot, the eminent French historian, considers that out of these early times, chaotic as they were, sprung all the order, and light, and life which our present civilization has to boast of. And he mentions a fact of almost inestimable importance, which had previously been little attended to, that the principle of liberty of thought, which is the very essence of all possible philosophy, is an idea that we owe to

Greece and Rome. The philosophers of those countries pursued their intellectual inquiries in almost entire freedom ; though, we may remark parenthetically, that there were terrible exceptions—Socrates, for instance, who had to drink the hemlock because he had corrupted the Athenian youth by innovations in religion, and by ridiculing the gods. For the most part, however, the State did not interfere with them—because, no doubt, they did not interfere with the State. But when Christianity threw its broad gleam of light across the world from the East, and made men see more clearly the connection between abstract truth in philosophy, or spiritual aspiration in religion, and the practical affairs of life, or the moral duties of man, there grew up naturally greater earnestness of purpose, and, for awhile, less toleration. It was so important that men should believe and think rightly, that those who thought themselves in possession of the true faith could not help trying to enforce it upon their fellows for their own sakes. Here, therefore, as in so many other of the world's progresses, there were mingled elements of good and evil, and just as men looked at the first or the second, would they say there was advance or retrogression.

It is, we think, to such influences as these, added to the fact of the completeness of the power of the ancient priesthood in Britain, and the traditions and habits they would leave behind, that we must attribute the double current of events that we see going on in England for some centuries after the universal establishment of the Christian faith—namely, a continual effort on the part of the Church to increase and monopolize external power, and as constant a growth of evil and corruption within, modified at times by powerful revivals of truer religious feeling.

To the foregoing very natural temptations to power may be added the grateful feelings of new converts ; and the high, almost divine, qualities they would attribute to those who had opened to them such new worlds of present hope and future immortality. The more learned among the missionaries and other ecclesiastics sent out from Rome, brought also with them the first-fruits of that wonderful harvest which England was to draw before long from the fields of classical lore. Then, too, they were self-sacrificing men in theory, and, to some noticeable extent, in practice. They did not seek wealth, except in so far as it might be used to decorate His temples, or glorify His worship ; they renounced the pleasures and comforts of the world, even to matrimony and family life. But, having by these means obtained the hearts of the

people, and secured the good-will of their princes, the original impulse that moved them to encounter danger and privations, and gave them strength to resist the sensual and worldly temptations to which men more or less commonly succumb, seems to have died out, and then it is that we find such men as Dunstan lording it over the Church, and such states of national feeling as could alone render his conduct possible. Consider, for instance, the question of celibacy. While men voluntarily took upon them this yoke for great and holy purposes, it is impossible to deny that with this, as with other exceptional measures, it might be a great good for a time; but it was the very essence of the matter that it should be voluntary, for if that ceased, we may be sure the original end sought would also cease to be attainable, or be so changed as to be worthless, if not positively evil. But as by degrees the Church at large gradually withdrew from the laity whatever power it possessed, and there is no doubt it had much, so next the heads of the Church began to withdraw the power from the general mass of inferior ecclesiastics, and to exercise over them a vexatious control, such as Roger de Hoveden shows us. He writes:—"Clerks who allow their hair to grow are, though against their will, to be shorn by the archdeacon. They are also not to be allowed to wear any garments or shoes, but such as are consistent with propriety and religion. And if any one shall presume to act contrary hereto, and on being warned shall not be willing to reform, let him be subject to excommunication."

But, in an incident related by Matthew of Westminster, we may find, it is to be feared, traces of spirit in episcopal dealing with contumacious or inconvenient offenders of their own order, that raise very different feelings. The chronicle in question says:—"A.D. 947. Ælfin succeeded the holy Ælfeg as bishop of Winchester. Of the blessed Ælfeg it is written that on Ash-Wednesday, when, according to custom, he removed the penitents from the threshold of the church, he exhorted them to devote themselves for the next forty days to fasting and chastity, and during those days to abstain even from the delights of their wives. But when the others reverently expressed their willingness to comply with the commands of the bishop, one of them began to jest, and say that he could not abstain from love and food and wedlock all at once. And the bishop answered him, 'You make me very sorrowful, as you do not know what the day that is coming may produce to you.' And so the profligate man, departing,



experienced the truth of the hard prophecy of the blessed Ælfeg, for the next morning he was found dead in his bed, it being uncertain whether he was not strangled by the devil."

This last explanation might be satisfactory to the unsuspicious people of the tenth century, but it raises very ugly doubts now-a-days, as to the author of this very suspicious-looking deed; one almost dares even to have unpleasant thoughts about the "blessed Ælfeg."



DUNSTAN IN ARCHIEPISCOPAL COSTUME.

Dunstan was just two and twenty at the time of this incident, and, probably, it did not escape his observing eye. Aggrandizement was then the dominant idea of the Church, and Dunstan was the very man to test what the idea was capable of. Miracles had ushered in his birth. Divine manifestations accompanied his boyhood. Whatever man could teach him he took care to be master of, even to composition

in music and performances on various instruments; to painting, working in design, calligraphy, including, no doubt, illumination, jewelry, and handicraft labour—that of the blacksmith. His well-known visit from, and reception of the devil, took place while engaged in the smithy that he had erected close to the church of Glastonbury. Of the “pride that apes humility” Dunstan was indeed the most significant example the world has yet known. It was he who, when king Eldred offered him the bishopric of Crediton, refused the offer—no doubt with most unctuous humility; but next day, he declared that St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Andrew had visited him in a vision during the night, and after one of them had chastised him with a rod for rejecting their apostolical society, had ordered him never to refuse such an offer again, *or even the primacy* of England should it be offered him; assuring him withal that he should one day travel to Rome—we presume—to be Pope. Such was the man who determined to reform the Church in his own stern and arbitrary mode, and who seems to have spared no arts, even to fraud and violence, to accomplish his end. One of these, the paramount one, was to enforce the supremacy of the Church over king and civil law, the other to make more absolute and sweeping the practice of celibacy within the Church, by making all the secular clergy (those who did not live under monastic discipline), who had not generally adopted the custom, agree to live unmarried if they had not already taken wives, and to put them away if they had. Out of each of these motives arose events not unworthy of notice, as affecting the progress of religious liberty. And first, as to the king. Edwy came to the throne in 985, a boy of fifteen, and was soon known and beloved as a handsome, thoughtless, but high-spirited youth, whose future was full of promise. He became enamoured of a relative, a young lady of rank, named Elgiva; and though she was within the degree of consanguinity prohibited by the canonical laws, he married her. This would not, in itself, probably, have been a crime in the eyes of Dunstan, if only Edwy had sought dispensation from the Church, and waited till he could have offered a price sufficiently high for its favours. But to marry without this was sacrilege—rebellion; and, in consequence, the marriage appears to have been treated as null by Dunstan and his party, although it was not easy suddenly to make it so, even by resorting to extreme measures, which were, of course, always more or less dangerous; for if they failed—clearly failed—all the prestige of spiritual authority was lost or terribly damaged. But on the day of

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the coronation, when the king had assembled the nobles and chief ecclesiastics at a banquet, and while they were deep in their cups, as was the custom, Edwy withdrew for a time to more congenial associates, in an inner chamber, to his queen and her mother, as we should now call them, but to his abandoned strumpets, as the old Church chroniclers chose to designate them, and with their notion it is evident Dunstan quite agreed. Edwy's absence was noticed by Odo, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had many features of character and aim in common with Dunstan, and who imperatively ordered certain persons to go and fetch the king back. They very naturally declined; but Dunstan started up, found his way to the chamber, violently separated the young couple, addressing the while the foulest language to the queen, and launching the most dreadful threats, even of the gallows, to the queen-mother. Then he forced the king himself back into the banquetting-room, giving the nobles and clergy of England the first great practical proof of what ecclesiastical rule would do, if unchecked. Edwy had, probably, submitted to much of this personal outrage through his unwillingness to retaliate by personal force upon a man he had been accustomed to look upon as sacred. But he soon caused the offender to feel his power. Some suspicion, it appears, had long existed against Dunstan's honesty as treasurer to Edred, the preceding sovereign. He was now called to account, his property sequestered, his courtly office taken away, and himself banished.

If Edwy had not previously been a supporter of the liberty of the secular clergy to take unto themselves wives, here was a sufficient reason for sympathy in their cause, and for help, which he began vigorously to render. This made him, of course, still more obnoxious to Dunstan, who was in banishment, and comparatively helpless; and to Odo, who was in power, and able to give effect to his remorseless nature and beliefs. He caused Elgiva to be snatched away from one of the royal palaces, her beautiful face to be branded with a red-hot iron, to destroy the charms that had helped to win Edwy; and he had her transported to Ireland, it is supposed, as a slave. But there were plain, simple hearts and unpolluted minds there to receive her, and pity her misfortunes; so she was tenderly watched, and her wounds were cured. Her beauty also revived, and she returned to England, to join her eagerly-expectant husband. She was seized near Gloucester by men who, if not actually obeying the orders of Odo and Dunstan, were carrying out their policy; and then took place an act that, all things

considered, has, perhaps, rarely been surpassed for ruthless barbarity and bloody fanaticism. This fair young creature, then not above seventeen or eighteen years old, was mangled and hamstrung, and left for days in torture before even death itself would come with its relief. Her husband died soon after—not even then twenty years old—and the alternatives offered to our choice as to the probabilities of the cause of his death are a broken heart or assassination. Terrible days these for an English king to live in, if he had either a man's natural instincts, or a monarch's sense of due responsibility!

Edgar, the next king, was only fifteen, and now Dunstan had his own way; and, putting aside the very question with which we have here exclusively to deal—his influence on religious liberty—it was an able, energetic, and successful way. The nation and the monarch might grow faster under such guidance for a time—and they did so; and if they submitted as regards the Church, had they not (the king and the great men, at least) their compensation? Dunstan could not endure the scandal of Edwy's queen—*so* married—but he could quietly put up with the concubines that swarmed in Edgar's court. The married clergy were now, of course, brought completely under subjection; most of them, indeed, were, in all probability, driven to join the monasteries, and accept monastic rule. And what of the wives and their children? Melancholy indeed must their fate have been. The cardinal legate, John de Crema, speaking to an English assembly on the subject of the wives of the clergy, said "it was the highest degree of wickedness to rise from the side of a harlot to make the body of Christ." So that was how these poor innocent women were spoken of. There is an amusing addition to the record of this incident. We are assured by the historian, Henry of Huntingdon, that this very same legate, after having, in his own words, "made the body of Christ," was caught at night with a real harlot, and that the shame drove him out of England.

Dunstan did not, of course, accomplish these darling ideas of his, the celibacy of the clergy and monastic discipline, without much discussion and contest; but the culminating point of success seems to have been attained, by the intervention of Heaven itself, in a supernatural manner to decide the question.

Matthew of Westminster tells us that when, on a certain occasion, "reference was made on these points to the blessed Dunstan, he convened a synod at Winchester; and in the middle of the conflict of discussion, the image of the Lord, which was standing in the church

close to the disputants, spoke distinctly, expressing such opinions that it rendered all the secular clergy and their favourers dumb. But, as the minds of the cruel persecutors were not yet appeased, another synod was held at Calne, when the king was not present, on account of his tender age, but at which the senators of the whole kingdom attended; and, accordingly, the matter was debated with great diversity of opinion in the council-room, and many reproaches were directed, like arrows, against Dunstan, as a sort of bulwark of the church; but they could not subdue him; when, of a sudden, the whole floor on which they were sitting, with its boards and beams, came asunder, and they were all dashed violently to the ground, but one single beam, that, namely, on which Dunstan was standing remained uninjured, and so he escaped unhurt. *All the other persons of the opposite party were either killed or injured in a lasting manner.* This miracle procured the blessed Dunstan and the monks peace from the attacks of the secular clergy and others; the divine grace having produced these and other similar effects."

Looking at facts like these, we cannot but see that the inferior clergy must have now needed a helping hand from without, to ease the galling fetters that were binding them in a servitude that threatened to destroy all independence of character, and expose them to the worst of corruptions—those which, stealing in under cover of a natural resistance to unnatural laws, and compelled to be content with secret, because forbidden, gratifications, derive from those very circumstances an increased zest, and so end by becoming at last evil and debasing. But they would probably never have obtained that relief, but for the action of the civil power; compelled, in the person of the king, to fight the battle of liberty generally, and on so wide a basis that it could not, by degrees, but include them too; although, no doubt, they were in many cases, and naturally, found supporting to the last extremity the policy of their own chiefs, in spite of all internal oppression.

Nature, however, asserted her rights, and priests would not forget they were men, and by degrees fell back into the old custom. So Anselm, in the reign of Rufus, a century and a half later, revived Dunstan's policy, and made the canon law more strict. All married priests were to put away their wives, and not suffer them to live on land belonging to the Church. They were not to see or converse with them except in urgent cases, and then only in the presence of witnesses. If they refused thus to banish them, they were to be deposed, excommunicated, and have their goods confiscated; *while the wives, as adul-*

*teresses, were to be made the slaves of the bishop.* And this law was promulgated at a time when more than half the clergy are supposed to have been married!

The contest we have spoken of—long smouldering, like latent fire, in the hearts of kings and priests—was at last to burst out into open conflagration, in the wars between Becket and Henry II.; and it would be impossible to overrate the magnitude of the event, or of the consequences to the liberties of this country.

Geoffery of Viterbo has a pleasant poetical passage, in which he describes a friendly contention between the courts of the Emperor of Germany and of the Pope, and which shows somewhat piquantly how, in the estimation of good, easy-going people, the thing should have been settled:—

“ The papal and imperial courts contend,  
Whether the two may be compared or not,  
And thus the courtiers of the king declare :  
‘ O father, thou art a spirit veil’d in flesh :  
Who dares to treat thee as a thing of earth ?  
How shall this lower world with heaven compare ?  
Thou art as God, the skies are given to thee,  
To bind and to set free, as thou seest good :  
Exiled in flesh, thy spirit grasps the stars,  
And Cæsar is a living law to kings ;  
Under one living law all rights are given ;  
That law chastises, liberates, enchains.  
He is the front of law, no law binds him,  
And yet he yields him freely to the law :  
And that is law whatever pleases him.  
God gave him to the world to bind and loose ;  
Divides with him his universal sway,—  
Himself keeps heaven ; gives all things else to him.’ ”

To this, however, the Papal Court replies:—

“ *If thou dost yield to Peter, thou mayst reign ;  
The might in both Christ giveth unto us.*  
Body and soul are subject unto me,  
My body sways the earth, my soul the heavens ;  
By ruling there, I bind and loose things here.  
I climb the skies, and reach the things of God,  
To give, to take, to chain, set free, are mine :  
The Old Law and the New both honour me.  
The ring and staff, though they be things of earth,  
The things they signify belong to heaven :  
Respect the rights of God, and yield to Him.’ ”

The Emperor, convinced by this logic, yielded to the Church:—

“Then gives he to the Pope whate’er he asked,

Restoring all that he had taken from God :

*Peace smiles, and all are happy in their rights.”*

Why were not English kings and English reformers similarly open to conviction? Undoubtedly they would have been saved much labour, anxiety, and suffering, if they had only seen how to make things pleasant in this way. But they were practical men, and they looked at the matter from a practical point of view. They saw that one-third of all the land of England had already in Dunstan’s time passed into the hands of the Church, and the third since then had become half; and there seemed good reason to think that the process of accumulation was still going on:—all this land, too, being free from the usual liabilities of taxation, military service, etc. Simultaneously with this—and the connection between the two facts was one of the utmost significance—they saw the Pope, the acknowledged head of the corporation that possessed, in actual property, so large a part of the soil of England, claiming from the king the right to bestow the ring and crozier, as symbols of the temporalities of the see, on newly-appointed bishops and archbishops; which meant an acknowledgment that these temporalities, with all the various civil and political powers and privileges they involved, were derived from Rome, and not from the crown of England. They saw this demand pressed upon one sovereign after another; and though, in his strength and indignation, Henry I. had answered that he would break off all connection with Rome if the matter were urged any further, the Pope only yielded, as usual, for a time, till a weaker or less independent king lived, as in Stephen’s case, whose title and position needed all the aid he could get from so potent an ally as the Pope, and who therefore yielded the point. They saw that the clergy, through the monastic bonds, were become, to a great extent, a power apart from the people, drawing inspiration as to their conduct and policy from the Pope, and that the regular clergy were in consequence always favoured by the latter, to the disadvantage of the secular portion of the priesthood, who, living in, and mixing with, the world and the ordinary life of the people, could not but share in some measure their views. They saw that, after the Conquest, the Pope had greatly increased his power over the clergy of England, by aiding the Conqueror to depose the Anglo-Saxon bishops, and other principal native ecclesiastics, in order that

while the one might dispose of their wealth, power, and influence among his own followers, the other might use the change to promote the election of men favourable to the policy of the Vatican. They saw the name of the Deity used more and more to cover every kind of personal and corporate encroachment. What must the judges of England have thought, when subjected to the treatment Roger de Hoveden speaks of?—"Whenever the king's justice shall hold his sittings, or whoever the person whose cause he shall be occupied with, if a person sent by a bishop shall come there and open a cause of the Holy Church, the same is to be brought [first] to a conclusion; for it is just that God should be everywhere held in honour before man." They saw that men in holy orders might commit crimes, and either escape justice altogether, or be so punished as to make the mockery of the show of justice only the more painful to the laity, because the Church insisted on dealing itself with all such offenders. They saw everywhere, and in everything, a growing design, which was indeed often and frankly owned, to subordinate for ever the civil to ecclesiastical rule, and so prepare the way for a grand scheme of conquest, which should reduce the whole Christian world to Papal subjection, and oblige all its sovereigns to hold their kingdoms as fiefs of the Holy See. This had been originally a sublime idea, when it meant simply to bring the world to Christ; but it soon unhappily meant to bring it to the Pope—a somewhat different thing. They saw the Pope evidently intoxicated with spiritual pride, and the full-blown belief of early possession. Think of such a scene as the following:—Baronius tells us, that when Pope Alexander made his first entrance into Montpellier, among the Christian nobility that attended him on his way in solemn procession, there came a Saracen prince or emir, who reverently came up to him, and kissed his feet, he [the Pope] being on horseback; then knelt down before him, and *bowing his head, adored him as the holy and good God of the Christians*; while those around cried, "All the kings of the earth shall worship him, and all nations shall serve him." It is a cardinal of the Romish Church in the seventeenth century who relates this, without any kind of disapproval. We have already had a passing glimpse of the practical tendencies of what one would wish to speak of, as an article of theoretical faith, the doctrine of transubstantiation. But a truly signal instance must not be overlooked. Pope Paschall II. told the Christian world that it was a most execrable thing, that those hands which had received such eminent power above what had been granted to the



angels themselves, *as by their ministry to create God, the Creator of all*, and to offer up the same God for the redemption and salvation of the whole world, should descend to such ignominy as to be put in sign of subjection in the hands of princes." Comment were idle on such blasphemous words, and on such awful human presumption. This it is, however, to hold opinions that, as we have said, must shape themselves into acts that would terrify the agents, if they could stand apart from the fanatical creeds in which they originate, and see them as they are.

These were the things that gradually sunk into the practical English mind, and that roused the jealousy of the English kings. The Conqueror himself, notwithstanding that he had received the most valuable aid from the Pope, was one of the first to begin the contest. Rufus took it up, and continued it, and even carried the war into the enemy's camp, by claiming to choose his own Pope, when two contested the right to the chair of St. Peter, and called each other Antichrist! But it was Henry II. who was destined to embark in the struggle to a degree that affected and embittered his whole life. The particular point of contest—there is sure to be always one matter, or event, or idea round which the hostile parties range themselves at such great epochs—was, as to who should have jurisdiction over members of the Church when accused of crimes. Under the Saxons, all parties, clergy as well as laity, were amenable to the courts of common law, where the heads of the Church mingled with the nobles, and other civil authorities, in administering justice. William the Conqueror, initiating the practice of the Continent, formed separate courts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and placing the bishops over them withdrew them from the ordinary courts. Now began two measures of justice for the same crime. No matter how heinous the offence of a priest might be, the canon law did not admit of his death punishment, and practically the utmost such men had to fear were stripes and deprivation from office. Not unfrequently, after committing crimes, men joined the Church in order to escape the otherwise inevitable consequences. To add to the public scandal, nothing was more common than that where two parties were concerned—one belonging to the Church and one to the laity—the court became partial; for, in fact, it was often in a measure judging its own cause, in judging such cases.

Becket was now chancellor, the first Englishman, since the Conquest, who had been raised to any high office. Henry II. liked the man and admired the minister, and waited but for a fitting opportunity

to make him Primate of England. He thought he knew Becket perfectly, and he had a right to think so. In synod one day, when the bishops were maintaining in their speeches the independence of the Church at the expense of the power of the King, Becket reproved them, and bade them remember they were bound by the same oath as the men of the sword, that is, to preserve the King in life, limbs, dignity, and honours. Henry must have felt fortunate to have found such a man; and so, in 1161, Becket became Archbishop of Canterbury.



THOMAS A BECKET.

Behold now a change, that looks more like the dissolving scene of a pantomime than a real event in the life of an eminent public man. Becket had been one of the most superb of ecclesiastics in his state, retinue, attire, cooks, cup-bearers, in his palace, and the magnificent hospitalities of which they were the scene. He now discarded all, clothed himself in sackcloth, ate coarse food, and drank only water flavoured with unsavoury herbs. The King, no doubt, wondered; but when he heard

of the daily increasing popularity of the saint, and at the same time of the entire change of mind as to the supremacy of the Church that Becket had undergone, he must have seen but too plainly the Jesuitry of which he had been the victim, and prepared himself for a contest, the probable severity of which was made but too plain by the elaborateness of the preparations. Becket began significantly, by complaining of the usurpations that had been made, not *by*, but *on* the Church. Castles, such as Rochester, great houses, broad lands, that had for



HENRY II.

generations been in the possession of lay families, were now demanded as belonging to him as Archbishop, through having at some time or other belonged to the see. But this question was soon put aside by Henry's becoming the aggressor, and formally demanding from the nobles and prelates, in solemn council at Westminster, assent to a project for subjecting the clergy to the jurisdiction of the civil courts for murder, stealing, and other crimes. The bishops unanimously refused. The King then said, Would they promise to observe the ancient statutes of

the realm? To this they answered, they would so observe them, "*saving their order.*" Henry saw what that meant, and pressed matters forwards. In January, 1164, a great council was held at Clarendon, in Wiltshire, and there a series of laws, or "constitutions," as they were called, were laid before the council for acceptance. By these it was provided that all cases, civil or criminal, in which a clergyman was concerned, should be submitted to the king's court; that appeals should lie from the Archbishop to the King [and so not to the Pope]; that no cause should be carried beyond the Archbishop's court [to Rome] without the King's consent; that no dignitary of the Church should leave the kingdom [for Rome] without the King's permission; that no tenant holding in chief from the crown, and no officer of the royal household or domestic, should be excommunicated, or have his lands put under interdict, until application had been made to the King or the grand justiciary; that churches in the King's gift should not be filled without his consent; that when an archbishopric, bishopric, abbacy, or priory became vacant, it should remain in the custody of the King, who should receive all the rents and revenues; that the election of a new incumbent should be made upon the King's writ, in the King's chapel, with the assent of the King, and that the person elected should do homage and fealty to the King before his consecration. These were comprehensive and sweeping measures, it must be owned, and were addressed with undissembled frankness to the direct cure of the evils that were afflicting the country. No doubt their very boldness and simplicity strengthened the King's cause, and made Becket and the Churchmen hesitate in their opposition. The constitutions of Clarendon were therefore accepted, and Becket himself signed them, but with characteristic Jesuitry refused to put his seal to them. He then went home to play the ascetic more severely than ever; until, lamenting his momentary weakness, and, fortified by the Pope's rejection of the essential parts of the document, he determined to recal his adhesion. This brought open war between the two men. Henry charged him with breaking his allegiance and with contempt, and summoned him before a council at Northampton; and when Becket tried to excuse himself, Henry swore, "by God's eye," his favourite oath, he would have justice. Becket was condemned, and one blow after another then fell upon him from the enraged king. Enormous sums of money were demanded from him in restitution of gifts received from Henry, and of the various revenues Becket had derived from his offices in Church and State. The King had determined to ruin him, and

was too much enraged to content himself with the most prudent, or legal, or just measures. For a moment Becket bowed beneath the storm ; and though he would not listen to the advice of his brother prelates to resign the see of Canterbury, he did meditate trying to regain the King's favour and confidence. But the conciliatory mood soon passed. He determined to dispute the kingly authority, and brave the kingly vengeance. It is impossible to deny the courage or help admiring the devotion to his order, or avoid even being moved with the spectacle of the strength of the inner conviction that could so influence outward acts, that Becket's conduct now displayed. His task might be likened to that of one who should not only brave the lion in his den, but do it when the beast was in the most savage mood, and in order to take away some most tempting morsel from his lips.

The King had succeeded, as he thought, in establishing what his predecessors had been vainly longing for, the supremacy of the civil power, with the Church's own consent. Becket had, at the last moment, destroyed that hope for him, and he was now about to take a still more formidable step. The great day came, when Becket was to appear before the King and the Estates of the realm. In celebrating mass that morning in honour of St. Stephen, the first martyr, he read as the opening words, "Princes also did act and speak against me." When he dismounted from his horse at the King's palace, he secretly carried with him a consecrated host, and he would not allow the cross to be borne as usual before him, but took it into his own hand, and in that manner presented himself before the assembly. The Bishop of Hereford offered, as his chaplain, to take the cross, but he would not permit him, and he resisted the personal efforts of two other bishops to wrest it from him. "It is defying the King our lord," said the Archbishop of York, "to come in this fashion to his court ; but the King has a sword, the point of which is sharper than that of thy pastoral staff." To this Becket replied, that "the king's weapon could indeed kill the body, but that his could destroy the soul, and send it to hell." The King, unable probably to trust his temper after such a display, withdrew to another room ; and thither the assembly followed, leaving Becket almost alone. So he sat down on a bench, and waited. Presently the Bishop of Exeter, terrified at what he had seen of the sovereign's state of mind, came to Becket, and on his knees implored him to have pity on himself and the other prelates, for that Henry had sworn to kill the first man that attempted to defend Becket's conduct. "Thou fearest!"

calmly observed Becket. "Flee, then; thou canst not understand the things that are of God." Soon after, all the other bishops came out; and one of their number, speaking in the name of all, said, "Thou wast our primate, but now we disavow thee; after having promised faith to the King, our common lord, and sworn to maintain his royal customs, thou hast endeavoured to destroy them, and hast broken thy oath. We proclaim thee, then, a traitor, and tell thee we will no longer obey a perjured Archbishop, but place ourselves and our cause under the protection of our lord the Pope, and summon thee to answer us before him." This was a subtle stroke, and quite in accordance with Becket's own principles and mode of action—to appeal to the Pope, making thus a show of deference to him, while the very questions upon which the whole quarrel originated, were as to the maintenance of the kingly power against the Pope, as represented by Becket. "I hear," was the only answer he deigned—or, perhaps, found it convenient—to give. When, however, judgment was about to be pronounced, he retorted by exclaiming, "I forbid you to judge me. I decline your tribunal, and refer my quarrel to the decision of the Pope." As he slowly quitted the hall some of the courtiers or followers of the king threw rushes or straw at him, picked up from the floor, and stigmatized him as "Traitor!" "False perjurer!" Stung by this, he paused, looked at them, and sternly said, "If my holy calling did not forbid it, I would make my answer with my sword to those cowards who call me traitor." He then rode away to his lodgings, surrounded by great numbers of the people, who cried, "Blessed be God, who hath delivered his servants from the hands of his enemies." At home, finding himself deserted by all the higher classes, he made his own high-reaching spirit show itself only the more strikingly for the humility of the garb. Imitating the Saviour's example, he exclaimed, "Suffer all the poor people to come into the place, that we may make merry together in the Lord." "And," continues Holingshed, "having thus spoken, the people had free entrance, so that all the hall, and all the chambers of the house being furnished with tables and stools, they were conveniently placed, and served with meat and drink to the full," Becket himself doing the honours of the feast. Many, no doubt, thought this only the excess of Becket's pious humility, and love of the poor; but the King and all the more independent and thinking portions of the nation, may be very well excused for considering it not only as treason, but as treason in about its most dangerous state of development, before it comes to the last overt

act. To set the people against the King was, we fear, but the too evident explanation of all those popular courtships; in any case, the fact that they were set against him, and taught to look upon him as the enemy of the servants of God, is enough to justify Henry's belief that he had to deal with a man who would, probably, scruple at no measures to attain his end—even, likely enough, to the dethroning him—if he did not retrace his steps, and make peace with the Church by his own self-degradation, and by the sacrifice of the liberties for which he contended.

Becket now went to the Continent, resigned the primacy to the Pope, and received it back again, thus calling the whole world to witness, as it were, the question at issue; and then he did not hesitate to announce that Christ was in his case again tried at a lay tribunal, and crucified once more in his person. Henry answered by seizing all Becket's possessions, by commanding the detention of all persons bearing letters of excommunication or interdict from Becket or the Pope, and by striking his name out of the Liturgy. He also seized the revenues of the clergymen who had followed or aided Becket. Lastly, maddened by the sense of the prolonged outrage upon him, and by the publicity with which all Becket's operations were now intentionally conducted—Europe, not England, being made the battle-field—and, above all, by the remembrance of the kindness and confidence with which he had first raised this man to power, the King stained his quarrel by an act which no provocation could excuse, and which it were a crime to seek to justify. He banished the whole of Becket's personal friends and relatives, with their wives and children, four hundred souls in all, and wrung an oath from them that they would show themselves to the author of their misfortune.

An attempt at conciliation was made subsequently in France. Henry agreed, at the intercession of the Pope and the French king, to allow Becket and his friends to return. A meeting took place. Henry demanded the recognition of the words, "saving the honour of his kingdom;" while Becket responded by professing obedience in all things, "saving the honour of God and the Church." Henry turned to his brother monarch and said, "Do you know what would happen if I were to admit this reservation? That man would interpret anything displeasing to himself as being contrary to the honour of God, and would so invade all my rights; but to show that I do not withstand God's honour, I will here offer him a concession:—what the greatest

and holiest of his predecessors did unto the least of mine, that let him do unto me, and I am contented therewith." This was a test, and Becket tacitly owned he would not stand it, when he still insisted upon his saving clause. The King of France could not help remarking that Becket seemed to wish "to be greater than the saints, and better than St. Peter;" and therewith the two monarchs turned away, and left the spiritual despot to his pride. Other attempts followed, and at last, a kind of reconciliation was made; a very terrible one, because so obviously untrue on both sides. Becket returned to England after a seven years' absence, and was received in an extraordinary manner—the nobility and knighthood keeping aloof, or receiving him menacingly, while the poorer classes still treated him as a saint and deliverer. It is not unworthy of note, that there were rumours spread abroad that he was liberating the serfs of the country. He entered Canterbury, escorted by peasants armed with targets and rusty lances. He had previously excommunicated some of the chief supporters of Henry—he now renewed the war by the further excommunication of the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of London and Salisbury; having obtained letters to that effect from the Pope. This was evidently a case where the whole country was hourly in danger of some terrible convulsion. The three prelates we have just named crossed to the Continent, and implored the King to give them redress: "We implore it both for the sake of royalty and the clergy, for your repose as well as ours. There is a man who sets England on fire; he marches with troops of horse and armed foot, prowling round the fortresses, and trying to get himself received within them." Can we wonder that, when Henry heard this, terrible thoughts passed through his mind. Here was a case where, if a monarch was ever justified in taking law into his own hands, he might think he was, for Becket was above and beyond all ordinary operations of law. "How," cried he, "a fellow that hath eaten my bread, a beggar that first came to my court on a lame horse, dares insult his king and the royal family, and tread upon the whole kingdom, and not one of the cowards I nourish at my table, not one will deliver me from this turbulent priest." These were dangerous words to use, if the King did not mean more than an ebullition of very natural anger; and if he did, then he brought upon himself, by his own act, the subsequent humiliations he was compelled to undergo. Four of his knights, Tracy, Fitzurse, Morville, and Brito, heard the words, and were speedily on their way to England, though their departure, it appears,



was altogether unknown. Henry, meanwhile, took counsel with his barons, and it was agreed to send three commissioners to arrest Becket for high treason. For that crime, he must have been found guilty. However he might disguise to himself the true character of his deed—however lofty the notions, and absolute the sense of duty that impelled him, it is clear he had so managed matters that no possible alternative remained for Henry, but to yield all or pursue Becket to the death. The four knights probably reasoned upon all this, and said to themselves they would only be executing, by a less circuitous and by a more certain path, that which would have to be done by public law, and at the risk of civil war in the doing.

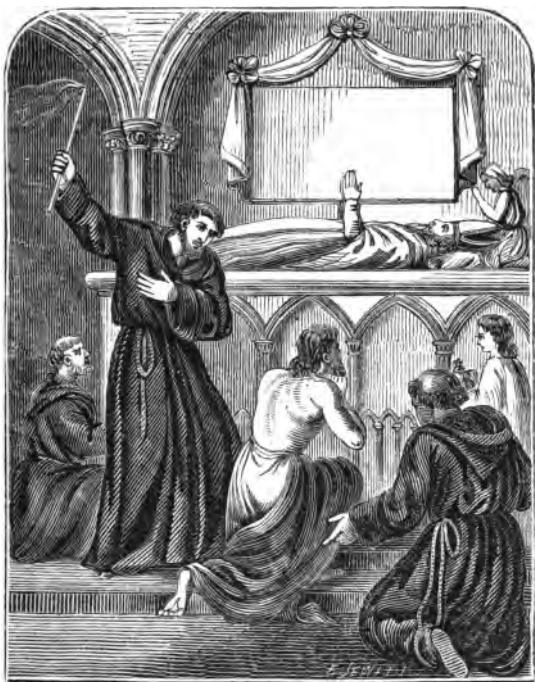
But they forgot that Henry had planted his foot upon law; it was that gave him strength—it was on that alone he could erect institutions, or “constitutions,” that should attest to the future what it owed to him for his long and wearying struggle. The knights found Becket at Canterbury, and they made one attempt to come to a peaceable conclusion. They demanded that he should absolve the excommunicated bishops, re-establish those he had suspended, and answer legally for his offences against the king. And then arose the eternal question of supremacy—would he acknowledge he held the Archbishopric from the King? He answered he held the spiritual rights from the Pope, and the temporal from the King—words that require to be read by the light of his previous conduct. They parted in anger; but the knights were evidently reluctant to shed his blood, while they could find any possible hope. Seeing, however, that he was not moved by their threatenings, they put on their armour, took their swords in hand, and returned to the palace. The gates were fastened, and they had to get in at a window, which the sacristan opened for them. Becket was urged to seek refuge in the church, but he refused until he heard the monks singing vespers in the choir, and then he went along through the cloisters to join them, preceded by the cross-bearer. As he entered the choir, Tracy and his companions appeared at the other end of the church, only just visible through the gloom of evening. All fled from Becket but one single man, Edward Gryme. Becket himself turned to face them. “Where is the traitor?” cried one voice. Then, after a pause, Fitzurse exclaimed, “Where is the Archbishop?” A reply was then heard, “Here am I, an archbishop, but no traitor, ready to suffer in my Saviour’s name.” Tracy told him he was a prisoner, and took hold of his sleeve, but it was drawn back so violently

as to make Tracy stumble forward. It is remarkable that even now they advised him to flee, or to quietly become their prisoner. They did not, in fact, know what to do; hesitating between the natural reluctance to commit what looked very like a murder, and their equally natural desire to relieve the King and country from a torment that had become intolerable. Becket appealed for a moment to Fitzurse, "I have done thee many pleasures, why comest thou with armed men into my church?" Again they demanded the absolution of the bishops. "Never, until they have offered satisfaction!" And then Becket applied a grossly insulting term to Fitzurse. "Then die," exclaimed Fitzurse, and he struck at Becket's head. The blow fell first on Gryme's uplifted arm, which it cut nearly off, and then slightly wounded the Archbishop. "Fly, or thou diest," cried another of the knights. But lifting his voice, while the blood streamed down, he said, "To God, to St. Mary, to the holy patron of this church, and to St. Denis I commend my soul, and the Church's cause!" Two more blows completed the bloody business. Henry's great enemy was dead!

Was it not at once a fitting retribution and a grand lesson for reformers of all times, that the man that was supposed to be got rid of by such foul means was, in fact, more powerful in his grave than he had ever been while living? Never in all history, perhaps, was there a more truly national martyr than he now became; shrines of the costliest materials were erected to receive gifts of almost incalculable value; the age of miracles revived; pilgrimages to the blessed St. Thomas's shrine became part of the life of England; reaction triumphed; the constitutions of Clarendon, that magnificent precursor of Magna Charta, were allowed to sink into abeyance; and the King, in order to set himself free from the suspicion that he had directly instigated or connived at the murder, was obliged to submit to a penance that makes the blood of an Englishman tingle to tell of—he submitted to appear at Becket's shrine at Canterbury, and there receive a severe flagellation at the hands of the ministers of the Church.

Yet it is a most noticeable circumstance, and one to which sufficient attention does not appear to have been paid, that Henry, having two alternatives before him, that of great personal humiliation, where he must be the chief sufferer, or of making great, perhaps entire, sacrifices of the civil rights and liberties he had been contending for, where his

posterity and the country would most deeply feel the loss, chose the former, and did not, after all, make any very great concessions as to the latter. He undertook to abolish all laws and customs hostile to the clergy that had been introduced in his reign, which he had in effect offered to do long before Becket's murder, as he knew well that the essentials of all he demanded had already existed in the laws and customs before his time. He also agreed to restore to the see of Canterbury all the possessions that had belonged to it a year before



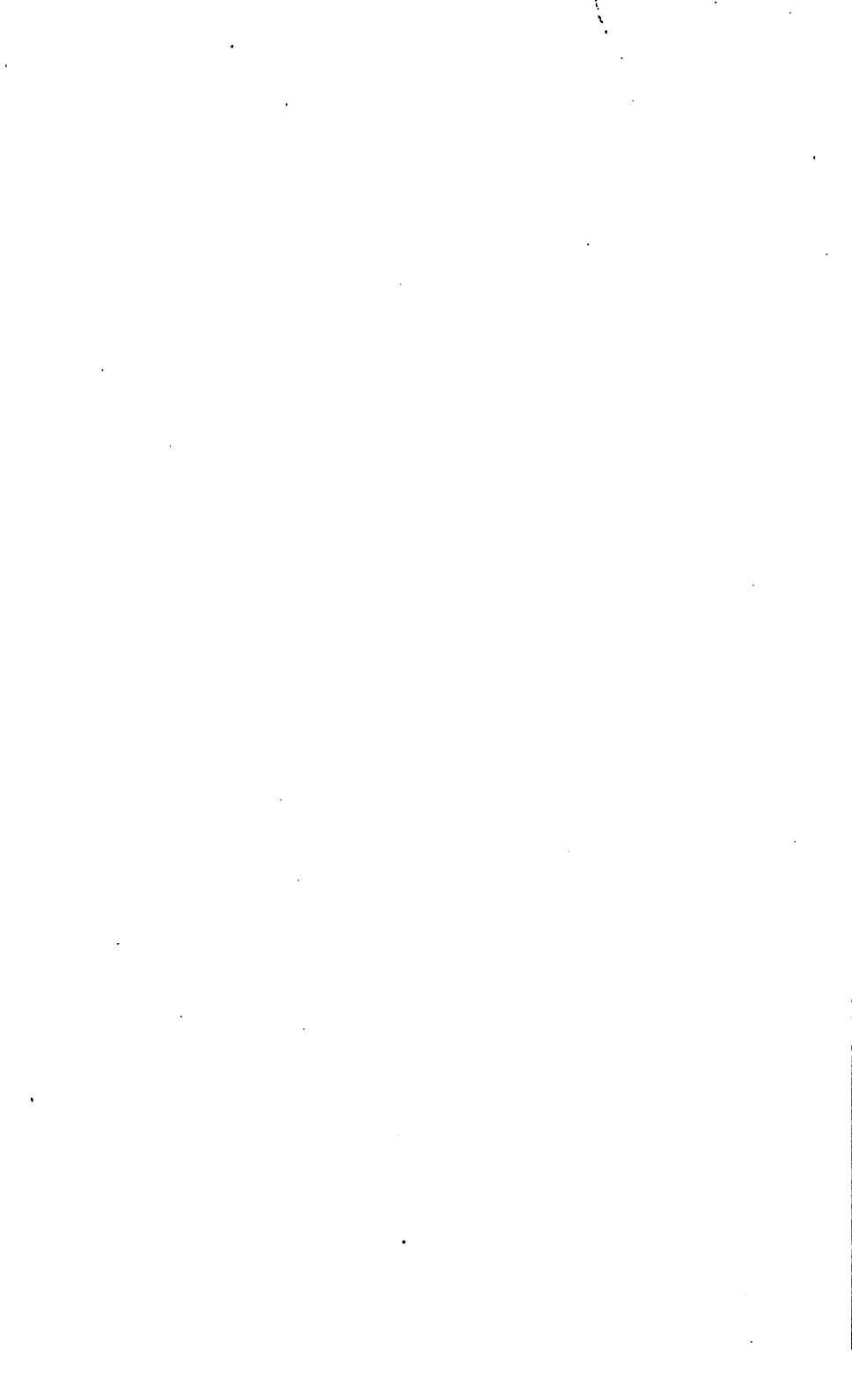
HENRY II. AT THE SHRINE OF BECKET.

the death of Becket, and to restore the property of Becket's friends. It is said there were additional secret engagements, and that Henry even took the oath of fealty to the Pope; but the story is too absurd to warrant a moment's belief. Were it true, England would have heard of it loudly enough before long; or of what use would it be to the Pope? She heard nothing of the kind.

But though these famous constitutions of Clarendon were, as we have seen, allowed to fall into disuse, through the reaction consequent

upon Becket's murder, and though they were afterwards formally abrogated, that matters little; the principles they embodied walked the earth as it were, and driven out from one form, they only entered another; or rather, like the hoarded store of seed which the flower provides before its death, to be scattered abroad afterwards, and produce a new and more numerous progeny, so the very breaking up of these collections of precious truths, and their apparent dispersion into oblivion, appear only to have caused their wider dissemination, till, by and by, a new crop and a new harvest appeared in all their abundance. Thus was it now. However seemingly the progress of religious liberty was stopped, it was evidently only stopped to gain new strength, or to be turned into some fresh path.

Thus, when Richard the Lion-heart supported the then Archbishop of Canterbury in erecting an establishment for canons regular at Lambeth, in opposition to the monks of Canterbury, who considered their privileges touched, the Pope wrote to the English King that he would not endure the least contempt of himself or of God, whose place he held on earth: "We will take care so to punish both persons and lands [countries], without distinction, that oppose our measures, as to show our determination to proceed prudently and in a royal manner." The King was cowed, and pulled down the building he had erected. But then again, when one would not have expected it, that is to say, in the reign of John, the rights of the civil power in one of the most important of all the questions between King and Pope, the right of election to vacant ecclesiastical offices, was taken up, and fought out with a dogged determination that again led to the most serious issues, such as John's wholesale banishment of the monks; the interdict of England by the Pope; the merging of the Church into the political question, which was solved by Magna Charta; and the invasion of the country by the French, aided in every possible way by the Papal power and influence. But let us here pay due honour to those who deserve it. Generally, in the struggles we have to narrate, it is impossible to divide the Church into two parties, one being with the Pope and the other with the King—one being clerical, the other national; but they always existed, and probably the liberal one, at all times, in greater strength than could be easily shown, because they would so far share in the natural instinct of *all* Churchmen to support their order, as to support it strongly when in the right, to be silent when it was in the wrong, and to be brought to speak and act against it.





THE FRIARS TRYING TO PERSUADE WYCLIFFE TO RECAT.

leaders only in circumstances of peculiar exigency. Thus Magna Charta was obtained "by the army of God and of Holy Church;" and when subsequently John and the Pope made up their quarrel (because each wanted the special help of the other to destroy his enemies), many of the English Churchmen, with Langton at their head, continued to support the barons. Yet that very Langton had been forced upon John from Rome.

This right of election demands a few words more. Originally it rested with the clergy *and people* of the diocese. "It was," says Dr. Vaughan, in his "Life of Wycliffe," "a circumstance highly favourable to the power of the clergy, that, while a distinct order, they never became a caste. No man became a priest by hereditary right. On the contrary, that office was accessible to all, even to the lowest; and the popular suffrage had much to do, either directly or indirectly, with choosing the men who should be raised to that trust. In the early ages, the suffrage of the people in such cases took precedence of the suffrage of the clergy. Even when we come far into the middle ages, we find abbots elected by the monks, the bishops elected by the inferior clergy, and the popes themselves dependent on the suffrages of the priesthood in their own city." The rights of the people were first got rid of; then the higher clergy, and the civil power managed between them—each for its own purpose—to get rid of the rights of the lower clergy; and thus the way was open for the Pope to influence when he could not directly choose the chief ecclesiastics of the country. Again: The development of the feudal system caused great political and military power to attach to all the higher offices of State, civil and religious, and to all large landed proprietors, and so gave at once increasing strength to the Church as its wealth and splendour increased, and constant alarms to the King, as chief magistrate, as to the uses that might be made of it. We have not attempted to follow the shifting phases of the contest on this matter; it was never out of the mind of either potentate. Again and again had the Pope tried to establish the right of election; but although he often succeeded it was but for the moment, and a firm King was sure to undo what a weak one had previously granted. Practically it came for a long while to this—as a sort of compromise, the Church presented to the vacant office a man whom it knew beforehand was the King's choice.

And so while public opinion was in continual oscillation between the two powers, tending now towards one, now to the other, but, on the

whole, collecting increasing strength for what was to prove, in effect, the final establishment of the supremacy of the civil authority in England, we reach the reign of Henry III., when affairs were apparently at a low ebb indeed. Bishops were appointed by the Pope, either directly through the heads of the English Church, or through arbitration subsequently, when the latter quarrelled with the civil power. The inferior offices were still more openly claimed. In the last three years of Gregory IX., three hundred Italians are said to have been sent from Rome to be provided for here; and in 1266 Clement IV. asserted in the plainest language the right of universal nomination to Church livings, and persons were even selected to fill the future vacancies while the incumbents yet lived. But now at last something like a majestic national march was to begin, having for its object the final settlement of many of the questions that had so long kept the country in suspense, class divided against class, and keeping ever open a possible abyss of revolution, the bottom of which no man could venture to measure or estimate. It is remarkable how genuine the actual progress recently made now proved to be, as exhibited in the peculiarly legal and constitutional features that characterized it. The division of the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions, for instance, enabled lawyers and judges to mark with accuracy the exact limits of their respective powers; and the instant the clergy overpassed theirs, they were stopped by what took the shape of merely due formal legal observances. The Church kicked against this, but the nobles and the government supported the judges, and so that step was finally achieved in the reign of Edward I. Next it was enacted that clerks charged with felony should be first indicted in the King's court. To stop the dangerous growth of Church property in land the statute of mortmain was passed. Still advancing, Edward next prohibited all abbots, priors, or other religious persons from any longer sending money beyond the sea [to Rome]. And when, trying on the old policy, the Church granted a letter of excommunication to one of Edward's subjects against another subject, the King instantly ordered the man to be executed as a traitor, who had thus appealed to an unlawful authority; and was only induced to pardon him by the high officials pleading on their knees for the offender, that the law in question had not been enforced for a long time.

Of course the weak and worthless Edward II. allowed the Pope again to encroach; but that reign was soon over, and when Edward III. ruled, matters were ripe for a final settlement. He and the



nobility wrote to the Pope expostulating against these recent encroachments, and received for answer an intimation, at once menacing and contemptuous, that "the Emperor, and also the King of France, had lately submitted to the Holy See." It is pleasant to read our King's reply—"If both the Emperor and the King should take the Pope's part, he was ready to give battle to them both in defence of the liberties of the crown." This is the stuff of which kings needed to be



JOHN WYCLIFFE.

made in those days. Legislation now went on more merrily than before. The court of Rome was expressly prohibited from making any ecclesiastical appointments in England, and penal laws were passed against those who should, under colour of such Papal authority, seek to disturb any patron with regard to his living. Similar punishments were directed against men who dared to cite the King or any of his subjects to the Papal court. Pope Urban not only resisted, but

prepared—good, easy, credulous man—to revive the vassalage and annual rent, which that mock-reformer, John, had agreed to; but the time and the men had come who were prepared to deal with these affairs in a spirit that must have appalled the poor Pope even to think of. There had now arisen in England a poor parish priest, one John Wycliffe by name, who had dared to put forth such sayings as these: “That God has given his sheep to the Pope to be pastured, and not to be shorn or shaven; and that lay-patrons perceiving the simony and covetousness of the Pope, do thereby learn to sell their benefices to mere brutes, no otherwise than Christ was sold to the Jews;” and who insisted upon keeping before the eyes of his countrymen, facts of the following character: “A collector keepeth a house in London, with clerks and offices thereto belonging, as if it were one of the king’s solemn courts, transporting yearly to the Pope twenty thousand marks, and most commonly more; that cardinals, and other aliens remaining at the court of Rome—whereof one cardinal is Dean of York, another of Salisbury, another of Lincoln, another Archdeacon of Canterbury, another Archdeacon of Durham, another Archdeacon of Suffolk, another Archdeacon of York, another Prebendary of Thane and Massingdom, another Prebendary of York—all these, and divers others, have the best dignities in England, and have sent over to them yearly twenty thousand marks, over and above that which the English brokers lying here have for themselves; that the Pope, to ransom Frenchmen, the King’s enemies who defend Lombardy for him, doth also, at his pleasure, levy a subsidy from the whole clergy of England; that for the more gain, the Pope maketh sundry translations of bishoprics and other dignities within the realm; and that the Pope’s collector hath this year taken to his use the first-fruits of all benefices; that it would be good, therefore, to renew all the statutes against provisors from Rome, since the Pope receiveth all the benefices of the world as his own proper gift.”

Conceive the horror of all the supporters of ecclesiastical things as they were, on listening to such language; and as they, further, remembered that this man had gained the ear of the King’s own eldest son John of Gaunt, and, as it eventually proved, of no small portion of the nobility of England. One of the most interesting glimpses of an early English Parliament that we possess, is Wycliffe’s record of the debates that took place on the question of tribute to the Pope. Would they were interesting to us only in a historical sense; but, unhappily, they have a far deeper meaning for us—a more engrossing attraction just now.

Substitute for the fourteenth, the nineteenth century ; for England, the Romagna ; for an acknowledgment of sovereignty in the form of a tribute of money, the sovereignty itself, in full exercise, or, in other words, the question of whether the Pope's subjects in the Romagna, in this year of grace, 1860, shall, or shall not, keep, as they have already taken, the management of their civil affairs into their own hands, and almost every word of this memorable debate has a direct application to the existing state of things, when England is threatened with domestic treason and dangerous foreign entanglements, because, in the name of liberty, she supports abroad what she has herself fought for at home ; because she is true to her own origin and political culture ; because she appreciates and honours what those bold barons of the fourteenth century—every man of them a Catholic—taught her ; and because she can now show she stands with clean hands and an unquestionable position before the world, supporting *not* her own faith against a hostile faith, but lending her strong arm to a Catholic people oppressed in the name of religious supremacy, in all their civil relations, by their own prelate-prince. That a Catholic priesthood should feel itself bound to obey their spiritual head needs excite no wonder, when we remember that it is a part of their belief that they are under infallible guidance, and therefore must (in right) pursue an essentially unchanging policy ; but that a Catholic laity should forget that it is their own brethren they would submit to permanent slavery, that they should forget the teaching of their own glorious past, which shows them how their forefathers were compelled, step by step, to confine the priesthood to purely spiritual matters, is indeed inconceivable, degrading, and most saddening to reflect upon. But to all such men we would say—Look upon the following record of what your ancestors and ours were ! Observe how they thought and acted, and pause before you add another to the many facts that seem all tending to show that the idea of religious liberty, in your favour, is fast becoming compromised, when that liberty is used only as an instrument to oppress.

The first lord, who is described as more bold in arms than in speech, maintains that the means necessary to institute and uphold civil dominion are coercive ; that the Pope, if he be possessed of the proper means wherewith to conquer this country, taking it by the sword from those who of old became possessed of it by the sword, he is at full liberty to resort to those weapons ; and should he do so, England will no doubt be found prepared, in defence of her right, to do the

same. [Exactly what the people of the Romagna say now, who only ask that they and the Pope may be left alone to deal with each other as they can.]

The second lord argues that the Pope is forbidden by the gospel to be concerned in matters of temporal dominion; that, as a purely spiritual person, it is foreign to his office that he should exact secular tribute after the manner of a feudal prince, "for the Pope ought to be the chief follower of Christ;" but Christ himself was unwilling to become a ruler in civil matters, and in consequence the Pope should not so be. For in Matthew viii., when the covetous man, having worldly greatness in his thoughts, promised to follow Christ, he replied to the thoughts of that man, saying, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has no where to recline his head;" as if He had said, "Do not think that I will teach you to work miraculous cures, that you may acquire a civil dominion by the gains you thus realize, while neither myself nor my disciples desire such things in this world." While, therefore, it behoves us to require that the State should be observant of his religious obligations after this pattern, it is clear that we are bound to resist him in this exaction of a condition which cannot be proper to him, as being purely civil.

The third lord argues, among other matters, that harm, and not good, has come to England through its relation to the Papacy; that the Pontiff and his agents have seized largely upon its wealth, which has often passed, along with a betrayal of its secrets, into the hands of its enemies. "Sufficient experience truly have we had as to the failure of Pope or Cardinals to serve us in either body or soul."

The next speaker mentioned is disposed to think that John could never have been a party to a compact so mean, foolish, and dishonest as that which is imputed to him. He may have paid a thousand marks for the removal of the interdict under which the kingdom then lay, but he could never have expected it to be a perpetual tribute. "It savours not," he adds, "of the religion of Christ for a Pope to say, I will absolve thee, on condition that I receive annually so much money? I hold it to be lawful to break a dishonest treaty made with one who by such conduct has broken his faith with Christ." If John sinned, John should bear the penalty, not the poor commonalty of England, who were no parties to his deeds. In short, to admit this claim of the Pope, would be to admit the right of the Pontiff to transfer this whole

country from the hands of the King to other hands purely at his pleasure.

The lord described as the sixth speaker reasons thus: "It appears to me that, as the third lord has said, this action of the Pope may be retorted on his own head; for if the Pope did really present our King with the kingdom of England, as he in so many words pretends, and in so doing did not give away that which was not his own to give, he must then have been the true holder of this kingdom; and inasmuch as it is not lawful for any man to alienate the goods of the Church without a reasonable equivalent for them, it is clear to me that it was not in the power of the Pope to alienate this fertile kingdom of England for so small a yearly payment. For if he might so do, then he might alienate the lands of the Church to any extent, and for returns never so inadequate, a course of proceedings that would so be found somewhat inconvenient." The speaker is content to leave the Pontiff on either horn of this dilemma. England did become a fief of the Papacy, or it did not;—if it did not, then all pretension to a tribute is fraudulent; if it did, then such an alienation of the goods of the Church is a delinquency which the Church should be prepared to visit with her heaviest censure. This speaker further says, that Jesus Christ is the chief Proprietor of all things in this world; that He will fail in nothing in respect to those who hold their property from Him, and in obedience to his will; while the Pope is not only liable to sin, but even to mortal sin, and in such cases, "according to divines, loses all right to dominion of any kind." [We may judge from this how the bold baron—the Catholic peer—would have dealt with the idea that the Pope cannot now consent to alienate any part of his temporal possessions, when parts of these possessions *have* been alienated over and over again by the Popes, under the varying circumstances of Italy.] This last speaker reiterated the argument, that it was not in the power of the King, and the few corrupt nobles who acted with him, to place the kingdom in such a relation to the Papacy; that to the validity of such a transaction the consent of the kingdom was indispensable; and that inasmuch as the consent was not obtained, the pretension of the Pope is manifestly without foundation.

And so the Parliament thought; and it unanimously resolved that John's donation was null and void, as not having the consent of Parliament, and as being contrary to his coronation oath; and they ended by quietly giving the Pope to understand they

would resist by all the means in their power. The movement, therefore, still progressed, and in Richard II.'s time aliens [from Rome] were debarred from accepting Church preferments; any person bringing over citations or excommunications from beyond sea, "should be taken, arrested, and put in prison, and forfeit all his lands and tenements, goods and chattels for ever, and incur the pain of life and member." Finally was passed the famous statute of *Præmunire*, in 1392, which, in more definite language, and with more exact aims than before, was addressed to the prevention and punishment of persons attempting to introduce Papal instruments, bulls, etc. The victory was gained at last! The Pope, it is true, continued to present to the vacant offices—especially to those of which the incumbents had died at Rome—probably because of these they had the earliest intelligence; but the favoured personages were too wise to avail themselves of such equivocal advantages. The bishoprics and livings were duly filled up by the King and the civil patrons. No more disturbance. Vainly the thunder of the Vatican fulminated in the distance; here in England the sky was clear at last, and men congratulated one another that they could now address themselves to their internal affairs, and more especially to the affairs of the Church itself, which had been sadly neglected while the apparently interminable contest for supremacy had raged.

#### THE CORRUPTIONS OF THE CHURCH, AND THE EFFECT ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.'

The kingly supremacy was established. What was gained in this? First, unity of power and purpose in government, without which progress is impossible. Second, the having to deal with a man confessedly fallible, and who might be taught or enforced to move onwards with the advance of knowledge and the improvement of the people, or their leaders, in the habitual study and practice of politics. Third, the divorce of the highest spiritual from the highest temporal authority; so that while the one was freed from the necessity of lowering in any way the lofty ideal of a Christian life by mixing in the turbid contest of party strife, or in the struggle for worldly aggrandisement, the other was enabled—and called upon—to pay increased attention to all those details and complexities of civil life which demand organization, industry, knowledge of, and sympathy with, men's worldly interests,

and which increase in an ever-increasing ratio with the growing richness of social life.

To obtain this victory there was much vexation—much danger—much incidental individual suffering endured; but, on the whole, it was not, in its *nature*, so difficult of achievement, if we may use a paradox, as it proved in the fact. We mean this: from the first it was inevitable that a strong power in the person of the King should be raised against a strong power in the person of the Pope, and the interests of the state were happily bound up with the interests of him who was to prove the strongest of the two. But we now arrive at a time when a mightier struggle was to begin for the advancement of the religious liberties of England; and when that advancement was to be made, through some of its most eventful stages, unsupported by other influence than that of the heroic constancy of purpose of its originators. The days of difficulty were, in fact, ere long, to merge into the days of martyrdom. And this, too, not because some new creed was to be thrust upon us at the point of the sword by a foreign people, but because men, acknowledging the same God, the same Saviour, the same Bible, would find they could not agree upon all the thoughts and acts that such a foundation led to. But how did these questions arise? Is it not a significant fact—one that shows how naturally docile the human mind is—that all these theological differences that now so divide the Christian world, should have been undreamed of—except, perhaps, here and there by a student in his closet—*so long as there was full faith in the goodness and purity of the theological teachers?* What if we should ultimately find that to reunite the broken links of faith, we must complete the circle of good works in our daily lives? What if we should find that that particular form of religious belief which can show us how best to reconcile the teachings of a pure gospel with the ordinary doings of the world, by raising the latter to the height of the former, is the one destined to win converts from all sides, and so restore the much yearned for unity? Let us, at all events, commend the idea to the consideration of all sects; asking them, meanwhile, whether they do not find that, in all their missionary dealings with foreign nations, their doctrinal success is constantly dependent upon the more or less of practical goodness and beauty they exhibit in their lives?

Let us now see, by a few rapid glimpses, what was the state of the Church when Wycliffe rose within its bosom, full of love and veneration

for it, at first. Let us see something of what he saw, as he grew to manhood, and looking round, compared his ideal with the actual state of things.

And, first, as to the internal divisions of the Church. Scarcely was Christianity itself introduced, before came also disputes among its professors. In the fifth century the doctrines of Pelagius caused much agitation, and the Bishop of Gaul was invited over to put down, by fair controversy, the disturbing head. A grand theological tournament took place, and, says Bede, Pelagius was completely beaten. With that unfairness, however, which so often characterizes beaten men, he not only persisted in believing and speaking, but in carrying away the convictions of his hearers; so again, a foreign bishop, Germanus, was appealed to, but he cut the matter short this time by banishing the leaders from England. So there was not much religious liberty yet under Christianity, even for Christians.

Then began an eternal contest between the different orders of the religious:—those who lived under monastic rule hating those who did not, and being heartily hated in return. Ethewald, on one occasion, entered a cathedral during mass followed by a band of servants, bearing cowls, which they threw on the floor; and the canons present were at once ordered by the King to put them on, in token they accepted the stricter life of monachism—which meant, as we have seen, among many other things, putting away their wives, if they had any, and renouncing every other natural or worldly tie.

Then, in the Anglo-Norman times, the liturgy became a subject of quarrel. What must a genuine old Druid priest have thought of the men who professed to be so inspired with the spiritual loveliness of their new faith, if he could have been raised in the flesh, to see that Norman abbot Thurstan's mode of convincing the native Saxon monks that his was the best way of worshipping a God of love? Thurstan's arguments were men-at-arms, archers, and spearmen; and when even these controversialists could not convince the hard monks, they let fly at them, right and left; and the high altar, nay, the very crucifix itself, became thickly covered with the arrows that stuck in them. The poor monks, on their part, did their best to reply suitably, by using in warfare the benches, candlesticks, and the very crosses.

The rise of the Mendicant orders gave a new feature to the old quarrel betwixt the regular and secular clergy. If the latter had disliked their former antagonists, what must they have felt towards



these fresh ones, who, instead of confining themselves to their abbey walls, and railing against the more worldly priesthood, who would not come there and join them, lived in the world, thrusting themselves into every village—almost into every house—taking, as it were, the very bread out of the mouths of the parish priest? It was the boast of the mendicants that Jesus himself belonged to their class; and one that so excited the other religionists, that a papal bull was issued denouncing the assumption as a heresy. But all these internal quarrels were as naught compared with the one that for nearly a century divided the Church—the election of two Popes (and as they died, of others to succeed them in each line), to reign simultaneously, each calling the other Antichrist!

It were useless to follow this part of our subject any further, or we might speak of the interminable discussions of the theological schoolmen, gravely weighing, for instance, how many thousands, or myriads, —we really forget which—of angels might dance on the point of a needle. But there is one topic that should not be passed over without notice; it became a very popular one just before the dawn of the Reformation. Is it pure accident that it has again recently been put forward, and made almost a cardinal point of faith by the head of the Catholic Church, just when, as we think, a new reformation is dawning, even in Italy itself? We refer to that belief which is known as the immaculate conception. This was the chief feature of the teaching of Duns Scotus in the fourteenth century. He once held, at Paris, a public disputation upon it; where he first answered *seriatim* full two hundred objections that were advanced, and then himself put forth as many more independent arguments in its favour. The University of Paris was converted in a body; and being so converted, did not trouble themselves about the belief or disbelief of anybody else, but passed a regulation forbidding a degree to any man who did not swear to his faith in the immaculate conception. We may judge from this of the notions of religious liberty held by the most instructed men of the fourteenth century.

It was an odd circumstance that this Scotus, who thus threw a fresh stumblingblock in the way of doubters, was himself conspicuous for his love of doubting; so much so, that when he died, and was supposed, through one of those horrible accidents of which we occasionally hear, to have been buried alive (in a trance), the following epigram appeared:—

“What sacred writings or profane can show  
 All truths, were, Scotus, call'd in doubt by you.  
 Your fate was doubtful too : Death boasts to be  
 The first that choused you with a fallacy :  
 Who, lest your subtle arts your life should save,  
 Before he struck, secured you in the grave.”

Need we wonder at another corruption of the Church—its Jesuitry—when we see men thus eagerly engaged their whole lifetime through, in splitting the finest hairs of doctrinal points of faith ; if, too, we connect with the mental habits thus formed an eternal craving for power. But see to what immorality it brought even the most eminent men ! Thus, when Becket first yielded to King Henry in the matter of the Constitutions of Clarendon, he said to the bishops, “It is my master’s pleasure that I should forswear myself, and at present I submit to it, and do resolve to incur a perjury, and repent it afterwards as I may.” That this was no individual feature of Becket’s character, this absolute fraud between man and man in the name of religious truth, has been shown, unfortunately, by innumerable instances of a similar kind ; but we need only point to Becket’s own correspondent and friend—the Bishop of Lisieux—who, during this grave quarrel, wrote as follows to the future Saint Thomas of Canterbury :—“It will not be for your interest to recur to particulars, but as much as possible to stick to generals. For our cause is safe, unless articles particularly exprest destroy our liberty. If we profess ourselves bound to fidelity, reverence, and obedience to the king—if we offer our fortunes and persons to be employed to his honour and service—if we promise to observe the royal dignities and ancient customs, so far as they do not contradict the [law] of God, it does us no hurt, because in all these things we are by no means bound against our duty. If, therefore, under this, or any other like forms of words, which can be thought of, the divine goodness should procure peace to you and your’s, *reserve the interpretation of these words to future times.*”

The luxury of the Church, so opposed to the lives of Christ and the Apostles, from whom bishops and others professed to draw their inspiration and authority, was only one of the many practical evils that arose from the connection between spiritual and temporal power. When bishops were great feudal lords, with immense bands of retainers and enormous revenues at their disposal, there was obviously a false position to begin with, and one that was for ever tempting the possessors and enjoyers of such worldly advantages to forget their own higher and

peculiar duties. Who can help wondering what the poor fishermen of Galilee would have said, if they could have heard such a story as this here following from the life of the secretary of Thomas à Becket, showing how the latter obtained his fish when he wanted any. Lord Lyttleton observes, on the authority of Fitzstephen, that one day there was served up to Becket, during a certain embassy, a single dish of eels, which cost five pounds sterling. It was talked of all over the country, as well it might be, for twenty shillings in those days contained in them as much silver as sixty in these, or little less; so that if we estimate silver at only five times above the present value, as much was paid for this single dish of eels, as if we now bought one for seventy-five pounds sterling, or thereabouts!

It is worthy of note how instinctively, as it were, men perceived, in the very earliest times, the necessity for some kind of restrictions upon the power of those other men whom all agreed to honour as a superior class. A Saxon priest was not allowed to ride a horse, or handle a military weapon; and in the laws and customs of a later time, there were various regulations of a similar kind. Here, apparently, it was the people teaching their teachers; but there were many eminent ecclesiastics who were indisposed to learn. The Bishop of Beauvais is a memorable example; while fighting against Richard I., he was taken prisoner and loaded with chains. The Pope then interceded for his "son." Richard, in reply, sent the Bishop's coat of mail, all smeared with blood, and accompanied it with the following words from Scripture:—"This have we found; know whether it be thy son's coat or no!" The wit and the severity were equally apposite. It was that same Bishop who, subsequently, got so far impressed with the necessity of paying some attention to the decencies of an ecclesiastical position, as to lay by his sword and take up a heavy club instead; so, that while he observed the canon against shedding blood, he was able to enjoy himself to his heart's content by knocking people on the head instead of running them through.

When such were the tastes, one could guess beforehand what would be the demands of Churchmen upon their fellow-men. We have already spoken of the highest form of exaction—that of the Pope from England, including exactions from the English clergy. During the thirteenth century this country had the happiness to be the milch cow of the Papacy. Certain of our envoys stated to a council held in Lyons in 1245, that Italian priests were then drawing from England between

sixty and seventy thousand marks yearly—a sum larger indeed, however incredible the fact may sound, than the whole crown revenue. Let no one say, then, that England was not, up to a certain time, a most dutiful child to the holy father; that she did not give him full opportunity to show, in all their depth and fullness, the value of his pious blessings, his unfailing love, and his infallible, unerring policy, before she began to have doubts of her own, or to listen to the voices of those who did more than doubt.

The superstitions of the Church might be, to a certain extent, explained by the policy of the founders of Christianity. They thought it wise not to interfere too far and too suddenly with many of the beliefs and practices of the people. The great thing to war against was the worship of false gods; yet even that survived a long time. It was not merely in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, but up to a time as late as the reign of Canute, that edicts were thought necessary to restrain the worship of material objects—such as the sun, moon, mountains, rivers, lakes, and trees—a sort of mingling, apparently, of parts of the Roman (or Grecian) with Druidic, and possibly a still more remote Eastern mythology. But it is impossible to acquit the clergy of gross neglect of duty, that they did not wean the people from such practices as their continual outrages upon witches, and Jews, and upon those men of science whose thoughts were in advance of the time; the first class we shall have another opportunity to speak of; and, as to the Jews, we need only at present remind the reader of a few facts, to bring vividly before his mind the condition of that people, such facts, we mean, as the frightful slaughter that took place on the day and night of the coronation of Richard I.; the way in which they were plundered by the State of their wealth on any or on no pretence (John, on one occasion, caused tooth after tooth to be drawn from a Jew's mouth, at intervals of time, until he consented to the ruinous exactions proposed); and lastly, their wholesale banishment in the reign of Edward I.; and from that time until the seventeenth century, no Jew was legally able to set foot in England. Even for this barbarous act there might be one excuse alleged; it shows that the King was no longer profiting by the popular superstition, but honestly, however bigotedly, sharing in it, and acting accordingly: that is more than could be said of some earlier kings. As to men of science no more signal illustration of the effects of bigotry and ignorance could be desired than the fate of Roger Bacon.

In his paper on Old Age, observes Dr. Vaughan, addressed from his

prison to the Pontiff Nicholas IV., he says, "being hindered, partly by the accusations, partly by the intolerance, and partly by the talk of the vulgar, I was not willing to make experiment of all things;" but, with the dignity of a true philosopher, he adds, "we must remember that there are many books accounted magical, whose only fault is, that they reveal the majesty of wisdom." Among the things which he did not, but which he intimates might be done, he mentions the construction of an engine that should be made to sail faster under the guidance of one man, than others sail by the help of many. Does this point to the steamship, or to some other propelling power yet to become known to us? Again he writes: "It is possible to give to the motion of a carriage an incalculable swiftness, and that without the aid of any living creature." Was there in brother Roger's imagination the dim shadow of something quite as novel as a modern railway, or of something even more wonderful than that? That he had mastered the theory of the diving-bell is beyond doubt; and it is certain that he had the notion of its being possible so to accommodate our species with wings, as to enable them to fly like birds in the air. That a man whose actual doings were so wonderful, and whose thoughts as to what it was possible to do were so much more wonderful, should be accounted by the dullards of his time as full of diabolism, as even to render his own denunciations against the vice of necromancy unavailing, were all but inevitable. The wise few who had liberally aided him, and who, to the last, would have befriended him, were overpowered by the fanatical many. He saw his writings put under an interdict by his own order; was silenced as a teacher; and suffered ten years' imprisonment after the sixty-fourth year of his age! For a short space before his decease he obtained his liberty again, and he continued to wage the battle of existence with a strong hand, until his eightieth year. It would have been pleasant to look on a necromancer of this order.

The Church even profited by the boundless depths of popular credulity. The ordeal in its various forms (walking blindfold and barefoot among red-hot ploughshares was one of these) was not only supported by the Church, but it is evident must have been fraudulently supported. Modern discoveries have shown how easily many of the things that were supposed to have proved guilt or innocence in some extraordinary manner, might have been secretly planned beforehand. But the greatest sin of the Church in this way, was the unwarrantable lengths to which it stimulated the naturally beautiful love and veneration of the

people for their good men, their saints, into a kind of second heathen worship, that substituted the thing created for the Creator. How they wrought upon the simple minds of our forefathers, and to what results such working tended, we may illustrate by two incidents. The Archbishop of Sens, in a letter to the Pope, delivered to posterity by Roger de Hoveden, told his Holiness, very gravely, that the wax-lights which were placed about the corpse of Becket before his interment, happening to go out in the night, he rose up and lighted them again himself; and that, after his obsequies were performed by the monks, as he lay upon his bier, he lifted up his right hand, and gave his benediction to all the assembly there present.

The other refers to certain figures extracted from the ledger-books, at Christ's Church, Canterbury, relating to the offerings made at the three principal altars, some time after the murder and canonization of Becket.

There was received during one year—			And in the next year—		
At Christ's Altar . . .	£3	25 6	At Christ's Altar . . .	£0	0 0
At Becket's . . . . .	832	12 3	At Becket's . . . . .	954	6 3
At the Virgin's . . . .	63	58 6	At the Virgin's . . . .	4	1 8

How eloquent are these figures! What deep satire lies couched in them! Need we be surprised that pilgrimages thrived in those days, when this was one of the consequences—nearly a thousand pounds of the money of the twelfth century received in a single year. What pious, earnest, and vigorous-minded men, even among the clergy, thought of such exhibitions, when once they allowed themselves to begin to think at all on questions so apparently belonging to the ordinary and normal policy and discipline of the Church, Wycliffe thus shows in his simple, patriarchal language:—

“Whosoever entreats a saint, should direct his prayer to Christ as God, not to the saint specially, but to Christ. Nor does the celebration, or festival of a saint, avail anything, except in so far as it may tend to the magnifying of Christ, inciting us to honour Him, and increasing our love to Him. If there be any celebration in honour of the saints, which is not kept within these limits, it is not to be doubted that cupidity, or some other evil cause, has given rise to such services. Hence not a few think it would be well for the Church if all the festivals of that nature were abolished, and those only retained which have respect immediately to Christ. For then, they say, the memory of Christ would be kept more freshly in the mind, and the devotions of the common people would not be unduly distributed among the members of Christ.”

The Reformer would, we fancy, have been still more summary in

his judgment of the unseemly quarrels that now divide the religious world of England on questions of bowing or not bowing—turning at a certain time, or not turning—chanting, or not chanting, and so on. In his days there was, it seems, a similar fuss about a question of the details of the ritual, which made him exclaim:—

“Ah, Lord, if all the study and labour that men now have about ‘*Salisbury Use*,’ with a multitude of new and costly books, were turned into the making of Bibles, and in study and teaching of them, how much should God’s law be furthered and known, and kept, where now it is hindered, unstudied, and unread.

These, then, were the more prominent of the corruptions of the Church which met the eyes of the young priest, who appears to have set his heart on doing good in his generation, by undertaking and developing what must have seemed to many of his contemporaries the mad, nay, almost blasphemous idea, that of reforming Christ’s pure religion.

But he was wary as well as bold, and could defend with his logic, what he taught upon religious conviction. It was not the religion he blamed; on the contrary, he knew, no man better, how difficult, if not impossible, it is for any one to be fully worthy of such a divine teacher as Christ—it was the men who, in his name, did, and preached, and permitted all kinds of unchristianly things, that he quarrelled with. Like Luther, too, in a later day, who borrowed large inspiration from him, he evidently had, at the outset of his career, no desire to go beyond the limit that any true friend of the Church might touch—he wished to be, in fact, as in estimation, one of those who stand inside the sanctuary, and with gentle hands repair the injuries of time, remove unseemly decorations, and infuse new and purer life into the worship; and not one of those who are without, striving to batter down the gates, as by an enemy’s hands, caring for nothing but simple destruction. Mark his deferential words:—“But as a lowly and obedient son of the Roman Church, I protest that I desire to assert nothing that may appear unjust to the said Church, or that may reasonably offend pious ears.”

But how was it possible that a man like Wycliffe, studying profoundly the causes of the many obvious evils that beset the Church, could help, before long, becoming antagonistic in his general policy, or personal in its application? It was clearly impossible. And so we soon find him, with characteristic courage, attacking the very Pope himself for the worldly tendencies of his rule. Would we might com-

mend Wycliffe's language to the universal ear of Europe now, when every word of it has even deeper meaning, if that be possible, than when it was originally delivered. First, Wycliffe believes—

“That all mankind, since Christ's coming, have not power, simply or absolutely, to ordain that Peter and all his successors should rule over the world politically for ever.”

Nor over the Papal States, as a part of the world, he would doubtless have added, had he lived in these days. He says:—

“This also I take to be wholesome counsel, that the Pope should leave his worldly lordships to worldly lords, as Christ did, and that he speedily see to it that all his clergy do the same; for so did Christ, and so taught his disciples, until the fiend came, who hath blinded this world. If I err in so thinking I will consent meekly to be amended, even by death, if reason would, for that I hope were good for me.”

Again:—

“Prelates and great religious possessioners are so occupied in heart about worldly lordships, and with pleas of business, that no habit of praying, of thoughtfulness on heavenly things, or the sins of their own heart, or on those of other men, may be kept among them; neither may they be found studying and preaching the Gospel, nor visiting and comforting the poor.”

It was then no theoretical or fanciful difficulty Wycliffe saw, but a deep ulcer eating into the heart of Christianity that he wished to have cured; and he saw, too, that, like the surgeon, he must not spare the patient pain. He thus deals with the Pope's assumed power to bind and loose:—

“Let it once be admitted, that the Pope, or one representing him, does indeed bind or loose whenever he affects to do so, and how shall the world stand? When the Pontiff pretends to bind all who oppose him in his acquisition of temporal things, either moveable or immoveable, with the pains of actual damnation, if such persons assuredly are so bound—it must follow, as among the easiest of things, for the Pope to wrest unto himself all the kingdoms of the world, and to subject or destroy every ordinance of Christ.”

It was but a natural, though, no doubt, to many good people, a startling deduction to draw from these and similar premises, that the Pope was not only not infallible, but that “an ecclesiastic, even the Pope of Rome himself, may, on some accounts, be corrected by their subjects, and for the benefit of the Church be impleaded by both clergy and laity.”

This was language that Papal ears heard, we imagine, for the first time in its history, and we can very well conceive with what sort of feelings and views it was listened to. Wycliffe might attack the friars



with a bitterness that would be inexplicable if we had not other and contemporary authors to show us what friars then were; and probably be himself left alone, as far as the court of Rome was concerned; but when he thus launched his audacious invective against the Vatican, it was impossible to remain quiet. So the Reformer was summoned to answer charges of heresy before the heads of the Church in St. Paul's Cathedral. On the 19th of February, 1377, the great edifice was crowded with people, anticipating an exciting scene. The appearance of Wycliffe has been thus described:—

"A man rising somewhere above the middle stature. His right hand raised in the clutch of his tall white staff. His clothing consists of a dark simple robe, belted about the waist, and falling from the waist to the feet; while above that gray and flowing beard, you see a set of features which speak throughout of nobleness, and which a man might do well to travel far even to look upon. Behind him you see his servant bearing books and papers, especially **THE** book above all books—ammunition for the battle, if there is to be a field-day."\*

He came, walking between two friends and patrons, who were also two of the great pillars of the State, John of Gaunt, the King's son, and Lord Percy, Earl-Marshal of England. This was a significant hint to the Church to beware what it did. And the ensuing proceedings were in accord with what one might expect. The Bishop of London, Courtney, fired at the sight, and this dialogue took place:—

"*Bishop Courtney.* Lord Percy, if I had known what masteries you would have kept in the Church, I would have stopt you from coming hither.

"*Duke of Lancaster.* He shall keep such masteries, though you say nay.

"*Lord Percy.* Wycliffe, sit down, for you have many things to answer to, and you need to repose yourself on a soft seat.

"*Bishop Courtney.* It is unreasonable that one cited before his ordinary should sit down during his answer. He must and shall stand.

"*Duke of Lancaster.* Lord Percy's motion for Wycliffe is but reasonable; and as for you, my Lord Bishop, who are grown so proud and arrogant, I will bring down the pride, not of you alone, but of all the prelacy in England.

"*Bishop Courtney.* Do your worst, sir.

"*Duke of Lancaster.* Thou bearest thyself so brag upon thy parents, which shall not be able to help thee; they shall have enough to do to help themselves.

"*Bishop Courtney.* My confidence is not in my parents, nor in any man else, but only in God, in whom I trust, by whose assistance I will be bold to speak the truth.

"*Duke of Lancaster* [speaking to his friend]. Rather than I will take these words at his hands, I will pluck the Bishop by the hair out of the church."

The people were, as the people have *at first* always been, with the

\* Vaughan's "Wycliffe:" a truly valuable work.

conservative rather than with the reforming party; and they, over-hearing these words, became excited, and the meeting broke up in terrible disorder, and Wycliffe retired under the protection of the great men, his heresies uninvestigated. But this failure only hurried on, in all probability, the next attempt to destroy him. Four Papal bulls were issued against him! And then another citation brought him to Lambeth Palace, where, however, a still more potent hand, that of the Dowager Princess of Wales, the King's mother, stopped the ecclesiastical authorities. They "became then," says Walsingham, "soft as oil in their speech; so were they stricken with fear," etc. The truth was, Wycliffe had fallen in days eminently favourable for his work; the King, and the great body of nobles and men of standing throughout the country, had found in Wycliffe the very man who could, on directly religious grounds, advocate the policy they had resolved on from mere political reasons. We have already seen that the question of civil supremacy was settled at this period, and Wycliffe had the honour and good fortune to strike one of the latest and strongest blows at the opponents of that doctrine.

The same good fortune attended him even when he became a more decidedly religious reformer, and when his great patrons fell off or became lukewarm. Pope Gregory XI. died, and immediately a new and more fearful schism than any the Church had yet known broke out; one set of ecclesiastics, the Italians, elected Urban VI., while another set, who were connected with French interests, chose Clement VII. For nearly a century this contest went on, new Popes being elected in each line as the former ones died off. Probably this saved Wycliffe, and gave him leisure for his greatest work, the translation of the Scriptures. It is probable he only came slowly to a full comprehension of the necessity and importance of this task. In such passages as this immediately following we see how earnestly he must himself have felt the necessity of studying the sacred writings:—

"But by the grace of Christ, I will keep clear of the heresy which teaches that if the Pope and Cardinals assert a certain thing to be the sense of Scripture, therefore so it is, for that were to set them up above the Apostles."

But, of course, if he, or any other truly religious man, ceases to follow the guidance of those whose business it is to explain the Bible, he has no alternative but to study the Book deeply for himself. But he began also to see how much larger issues were involved than merely satisfying his own conscience: the sense of the value of the study of

the Bible for all men was growing upon him when he penned these sentences :—

“If we follow this rule, the Scriptures will be held in becoming reverence. The Papal bulls will be superseded, as they ought to be. The veneration of men for the laws of the Papacy, as well as for the opinions of our modern doctors, which, since the loosing of Satan, they have been so free to promulgate, will be restrained within due limits. What concern have the faithful with writings of this sort, except as they are honestly deduced from the fountain of Scripture? By pursuing such a course, it is not only in our power to reduce the mandates of the prelates and popes to their just place, but the errors of these new religious orders also might be corrected, and the worship of Christ well purified and elevated.”

And in yet a third passage he comes still more close to the grand essential—a people's Bible :—

“The chief cause, beyond doubt, of the existing state of things is our want of faith in Holy Scripture. We do not sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, or we should abide by the authority of his Word, especially that of the evangelists, as of infinitely greater weight than any other. Inasmuch as it is the will of the Holy Spirit that our attention should not be dispersed over a large number of objects, but concentrated on one sufficient source of instruction, it is his pleasure that the books of the Old and New Law should be read and studied, and that men should not be taken up, with other books, which, true as they may be, and containing even Scripture truth, as they may by implication, are not to be confided in without caution and limitation.”

But, surely, some readers may think there was nothing extraordinary in all this. Let such persons read what an ecclesiastical historian, Knighton, placed on record as to Wycliffe's conduct, when he had at last commenced his glorious undertaking, and prepared a Bible in the English tongue, which the transcribers were busily engaged in making copies of for distribution :—“Christ, delivered his gospel to the clergy and doctors of the Church, that they might administer to the laity and to weaker persons, according to the states of the times and the wants of men. But this Master John Wycliffe translated it out of Latin into English, and thus laid it out more openly to the laity, and to women who could read, than it had formerly been to the most learned of the clergy, even to those who had the best understanding. In this way the gospel-pearl is cast abroad, and trodden under foot of swine; and that which was before precious both to clergy and laity, is rendered, as it were, the common sport of both.”

But the authorities of the Church were not content with condemning Wycliffe's conduct. In due time the following edict appeared :—“The

translation of the text of Holy Scripture out of one tongue into another is a dangerous thing, as St. Jerome testifies, because it is not easy to render the verse in all respects faithfully. Therefore we enact and ordain, that no one henceforth do, by his own authority, translate any text of Holy Scripture into the English tongue, or into any other, by way of book or treatise; nor let any book or treatise now lately composed in the time of Wycliffe aforesaid, or since, or hereafter, to be composed, be read, in whole or in part, in public or in private, under pain of the greater excommunication." And thus the liberty to read the Bible, which Wycliffe had, by an act of individual courage, secured for a while, was again taken away, or at least permitted only surreptitiously. Could we have a more significant example of the mighty scope and meaning of the words—religious liberty?

The last we can mention of Wycliffe's doings was the formation of his band of "poor priests," evidently in antagonism to the poor friars, whom he so detested, and, as Chaucer will by and by show us, with good reason. The poor priests wore a coarse garb, had little or no worldly goods, nor were they to be permitted to obtain wealth for their order; they had no benefices, and their one duty was to go about instructing the poor people in the truth of the Gospel—a remarkable anticipation of the Wesleyan missionaries of a later time. Such success had he in this movement, that it was said you could not at last meet two men but one of them should be a Wycliffite.

But his enemies embittered, if they could not directly attack, his life. Twelve learned doctors at Oxford, in solemn conclave, declared his views heterodox. A still more imposing meeting in London came to somewhat similar conclusions. A friar was appointed to explain to the people of London the enormity of his heresy. He was banished from Oxford, after being deprived of his office—the Professorship of Divinity. He was cited to Rome itself, but was too ill to go. During Wycliffe's latter days, some of his old antagonists, the mendicants, says Vaughan, could not "avoid supposing that a heretic so notorious must needs be most miserable in the near approach of death. Possibly he might be disposed, in such a crisis—limb of Satan as he had been—to repent him of his evil deeds, or to recant some of his errors, and thus to make some reparation for the mischiefs he had perpetrated. Wycliffe was in Oxford when his sickness arrested him, and confined him to his bed. Then it was that four doctors, who were called regents, representing the four orders of friars, were deputed to wait upon their expiring

enemy. With these most religious persons, the same number of civil officers, called senators of the city and aldermen of the wards, were associated. When these persons entered the apartment of the sick man, his head was reclining on his pillow. Some expressions of sympathy were dropped, and something was said about hope that he might recover. But it was presently intimated that, at such a season, it was presumed that he could not but be alive to the many wrongs which the whole mendicant brotherhood had experienced at his hands; and as it was now probable that death was about to put an end to his course, it was only charitable to conclude that he would be willing to confess himself penitent, and that, with a due Christian humility, he would be prepared to revoke whatever he had said to the injury of fraternities so eminent in learning, sanctity, and usefulness. Wycliffe lay motionless and silent until this address was concluded. He then beckoned to his servant to raise him in his bed. This done, he fixed his eyes on the said doctors and aldermen, and with his remaining strength exclaimed—*‘I shall not die, but live, and again declare the evil deeds of the friars.’*” He did, however, die at last in 1384, to the great contentment of his enemies, one of whom, an historian, did not scruple to mention the event in these words:—“On the Feast of the Passion of St. Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, that organ of the devil—that enemy of the Church—that author of confusion to the common people—that idol of heretics—that image of hypocrites—that restorer of schism—that storehouse of lies—that sink of flattery, John Wycliffe, being struck by the horrible judgment of God, was seized with palsy throughout his whole body, and continued to live in that condition until St. Sylvester’s day, on which he breathed out his malicious spirit into the abodes of darkness.”

But Wycliffe stood not alone in his holy work. There was a man who was probably his friend—for John of Gaunt was a patron to both—and who was certainly his coadjutor in one very important part of his labours. While Wycliffe directly assailed the whole host of friars, and other bodies or classes who had grown up about the Church, admirable, perhaps, in their origin and aim, but detestable in the state to which they finally sank, Geoffrey Chaucer, with an equally powerful and successful hand, undermined the same bodies by the skill, humour, and fidelity with which he drew the portraits of individual members for his famous poem, the “Canterbury Tales.” As to his truthfulness, the fact speaks for itself: if these portraits had not been so true that every

one—the friars and their equally worthy compatriots, the Pardoners and the Sumpnours, alone excepted—laughed as they looked, no man dare thus have written about men, who were so intimately connected with the Church; but being thus true, there was nothing for it but to laugh and enjoy the poet's exposure, and no doubt the great body of Churchmen themselves were wise enough to do the same thing.



CHAUCER.

Yet what a picture of the state of the Church do not these portraits present. First, suppose we look at the friar, pictorially and poetically:—

## THE FRIAR.

“A frere there was, a wanton and a merry,  
 A limitour, a full solemne man.  
 In all the orders four is none that can<sup>1</sup>  
 So much of dalliance and fair langage.  
 He had ymade full many a marriage  
 Of younge women, at his owen cost.  
 Unto his order he was a noble post.

<sup>1</sup> Knows.

Full well-belov'd and familiar was he  
With franklins over all in his country."

These franklins being the country squires of Chaucer's time, a class of men the poet has happily described in his great work.

"For he had power of confession  
As said himself, more than a curate,  
For of his order he was licentiat.<sup>1</sup>  
Full sweetly heard he confession,  
And pleasant was his absolution.  
He was an easy man to give penance,  
There as he wist<sup>2</sup> to have a good pittance.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
His tippet was aye farced<sup>3</sup> full of knives,  
And pinnes, for to given faire wives.  
And certainly he had a merry note.  
Well could he sing, and playen on a rote.<sup>4</sup>  
Of yeddings<sup>5</sup> he bare utterly the prize.  
His neck was white as the fleur-de-lis.  
Thereto he strong was as a champion;  
And knew well the taverns in every town,  
And every hosteler, and gay tapstere."

It is in such a position our artist has sketched him in the next page.

"He was the beste beggar in all his house;  
He gave a certain fermé for the grant,  
None of his brethèren came in his haunt.<sup>6</sup>  
For though a widow hadde but a shoe,  
(So pleasant was his *In principio*,)<sup>7</sup>  
Yet would he have a farthing ere he went.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Of double worsted was his semicope,<sup>8</sup>  
That round was—as a bell—out of the press.  
Somewhat he lisped for his wantonness,  
To make his English sweet upon his tongue;  
And in his harping, when that he had sung,  
His eyen twinkled in his head aright,  
As do the starres in a frosty night."

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, licensed to hear confession.

<sup>2</sup> There, where he knew or expected he should have "a good pittance."

<sup>3</sup> Forced (or stuffed), as we still say in cookery.

<sup>4</sup> A musical instrument, supposed to have been similar to the hurdygurdy.

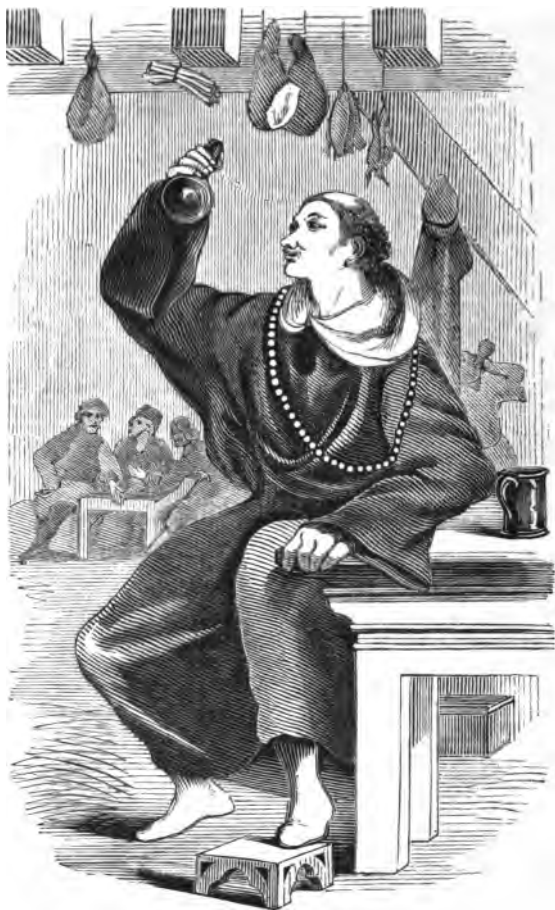
<sup>5</sup> The meaning of the word "yeddings" is uncertain; songs or story-telling are probably referred to. Perhaps the word should be weddings.

<sup>6</sup> That is to say, he farmed or paid a certain rent for the right of begging "in his haunt," to which, consequently, none of his "brethèren" were allowed to come."

<sup>7</sup> *In the beginning*. This evidently refers to some well-known passage, forming, in all probability, a part of one of the ordinary services of the Church.

<sup>8</sup> Short cloak or cape.

This is delicately and, to our fancy, deliciously done. But not even Wycliffe himself could equal the poet in his withering sarcasm, when he chose to go further. Thus, when with exquisite tact and humour he makes the Friar and the Sumpnour quarrel, the latter gives us his notions of friars in this little tit-bit, the beginning of which we throw into prose narrative :—



THE FRIAR.

“Ye have oftentimes heard how a Friar was once, in a vision, carried away in spirit to hell. And as an angel led him up and down there, to show him the pains that were endured by the condemned, he noticed that he did not see a single Friar in all the place, although of other folk



he saw but too many in wece." Naturally he was very much surprised at this, and so he said unto the angel:—

"Now, sire, quoth he, have Frerès such a grace  
That none of them shall comen in this place?  
Yes, quoth this angel, many a milloun;  
And unto Sathanas he led him down.  
And now, hath Sathanas, said he, a tail  
Broader than of a carrick<sup>1</sup> is the sail;  
Hold up thy tail, thou Sathanas, quoth he."

The angel is obeyed, and immediately

"Right so, as bees outswarming of a hive"

issue

"A twenty thousand Frerès on a route,<sup>2</sup>  
And throughout hell they swarmed all about."

Now for the Sumpnour's portrait. We may premise that the man so called was the Summoner, whose duty it was to summon to the ecclesiastical courts (generally to the archdeacon's court) all those unfortunates who had offended against the laws of the Church, by witchcraft, defamation, adultery, lack of sacraments, usury, simony, or libertine life; or who—for that was what the business often came to—were weak enough to be frightened when the Sumpnour told them they had done so, in order that he might let them off—for a consideration.

#### THE SUMPNOUR.

"A Sumpnour was there with us in that place,  
That had a fire-red cherubines face;  
For saucefleme<sup>3</sup> he was, with eyen narrow.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
With scallèd<sup>4</sup> browes black, and pillèd<sup>5</sup> beard,  
Of his viságe children were sore afeard.  
There n'as quicksilver, litarge, ne brimstóne,  
Boras, ceruse, ne oil of tartar none,  
Ne ointement that woulde cleanse or bite,  
That him might helpen of his whelkes<sup>6</sup> white;  
Ne of the knobbes sitting on his cheeks.  
Well lov'd he garlic, onions, and leeks."

<sup>1</sup> A large ship.

<sup>2</sup> On a route—in a company.

<sup>3</sup> In the "Thousand Notable Things," a prescription is given for "a saucefleame, or red pimpled face." Two of the ingredients are quicksilver and brimstone.

<sup>4</sup> Scurfy.

<sup>5</sup> Bald or scanty.

<sup>6</sup> In the before-mentioned book we find it also stated that oil of tartar "will take away clean all spots, freckles, and filthy wheales." This last word means, we presume, the same as whelkes, a corrupt breaking out on the face.

Another of his tastes is to drink strong wine, "red as blood," and then, says the poet, he would cry out like a madman :

"And when that he well drunken had the wine,  
Then would he spoken no word but Latine.  
A few termes could<sup>1</sup> he, two or three  
That he had learned out of some decree."



THE SUMPNOUR.

There is nothing wonderful in this, for he heard little else all day ; and ye know that a jay can call "Wat !" as well as the Pope. But if any one would search his mind for more, he would discover that the

<sup>1</sup> Knew.

Sumpnour had exhausted all his philosophy. Again and again would he repeat his favourite phrase, *Questio quid juris!*

" Full privily a finch eke could he pull.<sup>1</sup>  
 And if he found owhere<sup>2</sup> a good fellaw,  
 He woulde teachen him to have none awe  
 In such a case of th' archèdeacon's curse ;  
 (But if<sup>3</sup> a manne's soul were in his purse,)  
 For in his purse he should ypunish'd be:  
 Purse is the archèdeacon's hell, said he.  
 But well I wot he lièd right in deed ;  
 Of cursing ought each guilty man him dread :  
 For curse will slay right as assoiling<sup>4</sup> saveth :  
 And also 'ware him of a significavit.<sup>5</sup>  
 In danger had he at his owen guise  
 The younge girles of the diocese ;<sup>6</sup>  
 And knew their council, and was of their rede.<sup>7</sup>  
 A garland had he set upon his head ;  
 As great as it were for an alèstake :<sup>8</sup>  
 A buckler had he made him of a cake."

Lastly, we have the Pardoner, who, as his name imports, lived by trafficking in those instruments of pardon or dispensation, which were among the very rankest of the ill-weeds that grew up during the most corrupt days of the Church, and which, it will be remembered, formed one of the great objects of Luther's attacks in later times:—

#### THE PARDONER.

With the Sumpnour, continues the poet,

" Rode a gentle Pardonere  
 Of Rounceval, his friend and his compeer,  
 That straight was comen from the court of Romè.  
 Full loud he sang, 'Come hither, lovè, to me.'"

<sup>1</sup> Or, as a modern gambler would say, pluck a pigeon.

<sup>2</sup> Anywhere.

<sup>3</sup> But if—except.

<sup>4</sup> Absolving.

<sup>5</sup> "This is a writ which is issued out of Chancery, upon a certificate given by the ordinary of a man that stands obstinately excommunicate by the space of forty days, for the laying him up in prison without trial or mainprize, until he submit himself to the authority of the church ; and it is so called because significavit is an emphatical word in it."—*Blount's Law Dictionary*.

<sup>6</sup> Girls may mean young persons of both sexes. By having them in danger is meant that they were within the control of his office.

<sup>7</sup> And was of their rede, i. e., he advised with them.

<sup>8</sup> A stake set up before an alehouse as a sign, and which, it appears, was sometimes decorated with a garland.

The Sumpnour bore to him a stiff burden ;<sup>1</sup> never, continues the poet, was there trump of half so great a sound :—

“ The Pardoner had hair as yellow as wax,  
But smooth it hung, as doth a strike of flax ;  
By ounces hung his lockes that he had,  
And therewith his shoulders oversprad ;



THE PARDONER.

Full thin it lay, by culpons,<sup>2</sup> one and one ;  
But hood for jollity, ne wear'd he none ;  
For it was trussed up in his wallét.  
Him thought he rode of all the newe get ;<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Or, sung a base accompaniment.

<sup>2</sup> Shreds.

<sup>3</sup> That is to say, in the most fashionable manner.

Dishevel, save his cap, he rode all bare.  
 Such glaring eyen had he as a hare.  
 A vernicle he sew'd upon his cap.  
 His wallet lay before him in his lap,  
 Bret-full of pardon come from Rome all hot.  
 A voice he had as small as hath a goat.  
 No beard had he, ne never none should have,  
 As smooth it was as it were newe shave.

\* \* \* \* \*

But of his craft, from Berwick unto Ware  
 Ne was there such another Pardoner.  
 For in his mail he had a pillowbere,<sup>1</sup>  
 Which, as he saide, was Our Lady's veil.  
 He said he had a gobbet<sup>2</sup> of the sail  
 Thatte Saint Peter had when that he went  
 Upon the sea, till Jesus Christ him hent.<sup>3</sup>  
 He had a cross of laton,<sup>4</sup> full of stones;  
 And in a glass he hadde pigges' bones.  
 But with these relics, whenne that he found  
 A poore parson dwelling up on land;  
 Upon a day he got him more money  
 Than that the parson got in moneth tway.  
 And thus with feigned flattering and japes<sup>5</sup>  
 He made the parson and the people his apes.

But truely to tellen at the last,  
 He was in church a noble ecclesiast.  
 Well could he read a lesson or a story,  
 But alderbest<sup>6</sup> he sung an offertory;<sup>7</sup>  
 For well he wiste, when that song was sung,  
 He muste preach, and well afile<sup>8</sup> his tongue,  
 To winne silver, as he right well could,  
 Therefore he sung the merrier and loud."

A more unmitigated pair of scoundrels than these two, the Sumpnour and the Pardoner, were probably never produced in any civilized community, as representing each a class.

It was time the Reformation should dawn, and by its pure light banish from the commonwealth such hideous spectres of the mental night as yet survived and flourished;—"the hell-pestering rabble," as Wycliffe called them.

Although Wycliffe, as we have seen, was spared any great personal

<sup>1</sup> The covering of a pillow.

<sup>2</sup> Morsel.

<sup>3</sup> Took hold of.

<sup>4</sup> A mixed metal, somewhat resembling brass.

<sup>5</sup> Tricks. <sup>6</sup> Best of all.

<sup>7</sup> The anthem or service chanted during the offering, and forming a part of the mass.

<sup>8</sup> File, sharpen, polish.

suffering in behalf of his faith, he was aware of his danger, and contemplated it with heroic equanimity. "We have only to declare," says he, "with constancy the law of God before Cæsarian prelates, and straightway the flower of martyrdom is at hand." He did so declare what he believed to be the law of God, and his prophetic words were verified to the letter—the flower of martyrdom *was* close at hand. Not close enough to overtake him, it is true; but many of his disciples were to smell at that flower, with a soul rapt in its beauty, even while the poor body was quivering with what would have been, under any other circumstances, unendurable torture.

The first public attempt to stamp what was called heresy with public shame and execration, occurred long before; but the victims being foreigners the matter probably did not excite the attention it deserved, or call forth the public sentiment in any noticeable way. About the beginning of the year 1116, certain foreigners, Germans, who had been living for some time in England, and had converted to their religious opinions some among the poorer people, began to attract the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities, and were cited before the King at Oxford. To the question of what was their belief, Gerard, their leader, answered that they were Christians, and venerated the doctrines of the apostles. But it is alleged that, when they were examined upon particulars, they spoke impiously of the eucharist, baptism, and marriage, and when urged with texts of Scripture, refused all discussion, declaring that they believed as they were taught, and would not dispute about their faith. When they were exhorted to recant, they received the admonition; and when threatened with punishment, they answered with a smile, "Blessed are they who suffer for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." As heresy was new in England, the judges were at loss how to act; but canons had already been enacted by the Council of Tours against the Albigenses, and sentence was pronounced in conformity with these. The accused were condemned to be branded in the forehead with a hot iron, and to be publicly whipped and expelled out of Oxford, while the king's subjects were forbidden by proclamation to shelter or relieve them. The enthusiasts went to their punishment in triumph, singing, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you and persecute you." Their garments were cut off at the waist, their brows were seared, and their backs torn with scourges; and thus bleeding, and almost naked, in the depth of winter, they wandered about unsheltered among the fields, until they died. Thus did Christ's authorized expounders read his law

of love and brotherhood to these poor foreigners! Such humiliating facts should never be forgotten, for they show the monstrous, almost incredible inconsistencies into which pious, wise, and even kindly-disposed men may be drawn by theological differences, or by mental casuistry. How different was Wycliffe's teaching! What he would have thought of thus cutting off so many of his brothers and sisters from the communion of humanity, we know from a very grand sentence he once gave utterance to: "All those who commune with accursed men are cursed by our prelates, particularly if they do it knowingly. But by this sentence God himself is accursed, since no accursed man may be in this life, unless God shall knowingly commune with him, and give him bread and sustenance, whether he be wrongfully cursed or rightfully." Wycliffe knew that the rain falleth impartially even upon the just and the unjust; and that the fact showed God's love for men to be a very different love to that which persecuting men had in their hearts toward other men, even to God's own children like themselves, if they differed in points of belief.

One result, little dreamed of before, of the cessation of the contest for supremacy, was to give the Church more power than ever over all other questions, and for this simple reason—the King, having obtained what he wanted, too often forgot that he was but the guardian, protector, and chief magistrate of the people; and that supremacy itself meant in its essence not the superior power of an individual called a King over another individual called a Pope, but of the unquestioned power of the *State* over the management of all its affairs, leaving religious questions still mainly in the hands of the clergy, but not so independent that it could hamper the national progress. The King soon forgot this—perhaps, indeed, he rarely allowed his mind to reach to the height of such an argument—and he had to be taught it in the same bitter school of adversity, as the Pope had been compelled to submit to. All this we shall show by and by in our view of the Progress of Civil Liberty.

And so, for example, when Henry IV. came to the throne by the deposition of Richard II.; wishing to have all possible aid from the Church, no better mode seems to have occurred to him of pleasing the Pope and the great English ecclesiastics than by suggesting harsher laws against heretics, whom he proposed with all his power to exterminate. It is not improbable, also, that even thus early there may have been some consciousness rising in the minds of kings and statesmen, that there

was yet a third power dimly seen every now and then for the moment in the distance—the power of the people—which would occasionally issue forth in terrible strength into the light of day, in such insurrections as Wat Tyler's, and ominously threaten, before it sank back into oblivion. Against this power King and priest must, from time to time, have seen the possible necessity of future combination; and indeed we all know that that gradually came to be the state of things, as each grew weaker and weaker in its own independent life.

Heretics now began to attack and weaken the Church, and the King rushed forward to its aid. The battle began with the Lollards; men so called, it is supposed, from *lolium*, tares, the tares among the Christian wheat, which had to be separated and burned away; or from *lollen* or *lullen*, to lull, as expressive of their psalm-singing; or, lastly, from Lolhard, who was burned at Cologne in 1322. They drew their inspiration partly direct from John Huss, and partly from Wycliffe. In their petition to the House of Commons, in 1395, they explain their tenets thus:—The possession of temporalities by the Church is contrary to the law of Christ, and destructive of faith, hope, and charity; the Romish priesthood are no establishment of Christ's; outward rites of worship have no warrant in Scripture, and are of little importance; celibacy is in its nature immoral, and begets scandalous irregularity; the pretended miracle of transubstantiation makes the people idolaters; exorcisms and benedictions over wine and bread savour more of necromancy than religion; clergy, in accepting secular trusts, become hermaphrodites, trying to serve God and Mammon. They further object to prayers for the dead, to pilgrimages, to auricular confession, to priestly absolution from sin; and they add that deaths by war or by judicial punishments are opposed to the spirit of Christianity, etc. The practical answer of Parliament was a new law, forbidding all teaching, except by license from the diocesan; ordering all heretical books and writings to be given up, with imprisonments and fines for those who disobeyed; and if these gentle monitors did not suffice to make the erring people abjure, or, if after abjuration, they relapsed, then the English Parliament, at the instigation of the English Church, determined—one can scarcely read the words that for the first time brought such awful calamities on England without a thrill of horror and disgust—that such persons shall be made over to the sheriff of the county, or mayor and bailiffs of the nearest town, who “shall receive, and them before the people in an high place do



[cause] to be burnt, that such punishment may strike in fear to the minds of others, whereby no such wicked doctrine and heretical and erroneous opinions, nor their authors, nor fauters [favourers] in the said realm and dominions against the Catholic faith, Christian law, and determination of the holy Church, which God prohibit, be sustained, or in any wise suffered." We see, then, that the Legislature, including the Commons of England, representing, possibly, accurately enough the feelings of the bulk of the people of England, were at this time utterly ignorant of what the word religious liberty meant; and terrible were to be the sufferings of many of that people, in themselves or their descendants, before they should have learned. The first victim, strange to say, was one of the Church's own members, William Sawtre, rector of Lynn; who was deprived of his office in 1399 for heresy, but having abjured, was again admitted to the Church. As he thought over these facts, he appears to have perceived that it was not his belief but his courage that had been shaken; and with that noble shame that so often characterized the conduct of the more vacillating martyrs, he caused himself to be cited before a convocation for saying he would not worship the *cross* on which Christ suffered, and that the sacramental bread continued to be bread. He was, in consequence, sentenced as a relapsed heretic, and burned in Smithfield, in March, 1401, amidst a vast concourse of spectators. Then, for the first time in England, was seen what the Church was prepared to do to destroy religious liberty, and what members of that very Church were prepared to suffer in defence of the same mighty principle.

The next victim, Thorpe, is supposed to have died in his dungeon: so the successor of Sawtre at the stake was a tailor, John Badby, who denied the doctrine of transubstantiation. His case was more than usually painful, but also more than usually elevating as a sublime moral spectacle. Foxe writes:—"It happened that the prince [Henry, afterwards Henry V.], the king's eldest son, was there present, who, showing some part of the good Samaritan, began to endeavour and essay how to save the life of him whom the hypocritical Levites and Pharisees sought to put to death. He admonished and counselled him that, having respect unto himself, he should speedily withdraw himself out of these dangerous labyrinths of opinions, adding oftentimes threatenings, which might have daunted any man's stomach. Also Courteny, at that time Chancellor of Oxford, preached unto him, and informed him of the faith of Holy Church. In the mean season the

prior of St. Bartholomew's, in Smithfield, brought, with all solemnity, the sacrament of God's body, with twelve torches borne before, and so showed the sacrament to the poor man being at the stake. And then they, demanding of him how he believed in it, he answered, that he knew well it was hallowed bread and not God's body, and then was the tun put over him, and fire put unto him. And when the innocent soul felt the fire, he cried 'Mercy!' belike upon the Lord; with which horrible cry the prince being moved, commanded them to take away the tun, and quench the fire. This commandment being done, he asked him if he would forsake heresy to take him to the faith of holy Church?



BADBY'S MARTYRDOM.

which thing, if he would do, he should have good enough; promising also unto him a yearly stipend out of the king's treasury, so much as should suffice for his contention [contentment]. But this valiant champion of Christ, neglecting the prince's fair words, as also contemning all men's devices, being fully determined to suffer any kind of torment, were it never so grievous, than so great idolatry and wickedness, refused the offer of worldly promises, being, no doubt, more vehemently inflamed with the Spirit of God than with any earthly desire. Wherefore, when as yet he continued unmovable in his former mind, the prince commanded him to be put again into the pipe or tun."

And so the poor tailor died—a hero, to our thinking, if ever the earth held one.

We need not longer dwell on the fate of individual victims ; the list of them, still growing in bulk and in horror, including, among others, Lord Cobham, suspended in chains by the middle in St. Giles's Fields, in the reign of Henry V., his own early friend ; William Taylor, burnt for asserting that prayers for supernatural gifts should be offered to the Deity alone ; four Churchmen, burned in 1423 for their Lollardism ; the Bishop of Chichester, confined in close captivity after recantation and seeing his books burned ; then a cessation during the Wars of



MARTYRDOM OF RICHARD HUNNE IN LOLLARD'S TOWER.

the Roses ; then, in 1494, the first female martyr burned ; then the burning of Tylsworth, in 1506, by the hand of his own daughter—the execrable wretches who presided over the execution not knowing else how to increase the terror of the event, actually compelled the maiden to set fire to the faggots ; Lawrence Ghest burned in the presence of his wife and seven children : these were some of the chief landmarks that guide us through this awful period of our history, and which yet were only foreshadowing the still more fearful period to come. The last case we shall mention, as one immediately preceding the Reformation, is that of Hunne, a merchant-tailor of London, who, being sued for some small matter by a clergyman in the spiritual court, which sat

under the authority of the Pope's legate, took out, with startling boldness, a writ of *præmunire* against his pursuer for bringing him, a King's subject, under foreign jurisdiction. The clergy, in their exasperation, resorted to the usual weapon, heresy; and Hunne, submitting, asked pardon for his errors in that way. He ought then to have been dismissed; but as he persisted in his real and original offence, the suit with the clergyman, he was sent back to prison, and there, two days later, he was found suspended from a hook in the ceiling, and dead. It was pretended that he had committed suicide, but a coroner's inquest came to a different conclusion. Foxe shows us, in his picture which we have copied, what the general impression was of the mode; we see there the two murderers just escaping, one of them blowing out the candle. It may serve to illustrate by another trait the character of the Sumpnour, that the bishop's official who held that office is supposed to have been the chief instrument of this cruel and execrable act.

But the seeds of the Reformation were ripe now, and there lacked only one thing more, the mode of distributing them over the soil; and that came, too, just when it was of the greatest importance it should come. Printing was developed on the Continent, and was brought into England by Caxton. Let the Church have the full benefit of its patronage of the illustrious printer. This is only one of its many good deeds in the cause of civilization; and it is one we have reason to be grateful for. It was under the shelter of Westminster Abbey that Caxton found his first home. Certainly he would not have found it, had his patrons foreseen the future of the machine which he then set up—the first English Printing Press. When Wycliffe's bones were taken up, and burnt by order of the Council of Constance, fifty years after his death, the ashes were cast into the little river Swift, which, says Fuller, “conveyed his ashes into the Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, thence into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over.” And by what agency but THE PRINTING PRESS?

## PROGRESS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

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### CHAPTER II.

#### THE REFORMATION.

THERE is perhaps no question in history more difficult to solve, or more provocative of the desire that it should be solved, than the relative influence of men and events on each other. Sometimes the man seems to be called forth by events, or by an irresistible demand for him; all the influences of the time serve so to mould the minds of the people in the requisite direction, that out of them must arise some one or more individuals worthy to represent the existing facts, and the incipient onward movement to which they point. Sometimes, on the contrary, it is the man who starts up, unwelcome possibly at first, because misunderstood; but who, by the force of his genius and other favourable concurring circumstances, appears to stir the depths of national life, and bring from it events that seem but to follow in his wake like so many captives at the chariot wheels of an old Roman conqueror. But whatever the precise amount of influence due to either—whether the man dominates most over events, or events dominate most over the man—it is very plain that in all cases there must be a profound sympathy betwixt the two, or there can be no great success realized; none of those grand historic revolutions which we ever gaze on and study with such deep curiosity, and such undying interest, in all their details.

To apply this to the Reformation:—with one class of historians that mighty movement is mainly due not to Wycliffe, or to his still greater successor Luther, and of course therefore not to the abuses in the Church which these men so powerfully exposed. No; it is due, they think, to Henry VIII. If true, there is no denying this is a most

humiliating circumstance. One can with difficulty believe that pure waters ever flowed from so polluted a fountain, no matter through what tracts of space or time they may run a purifying course. At first glance it must be owned the collocation of facts does look very intelligible, very ugly, and thoroughly decisive. Here is Henry VIII. showing himself, up to a certain time, a thoroughly Catholic monarch; one whose chief dealings with the Protestant heresy then growing up on the Continent is first to seize and burn its books; then to suggest to Louis of Bavaria a similar conflagration of Luther in person; and, lastly, to write a book against him, and obtain from the Pope, for so doing, the much-enjoyed title of "Defender of the Faith!" And why does he change, this zealous Catholic prince? No qualms of doubt oppress him. There is not a single tenet taught by the most exalted churchman of his day, that is too much for Henry's spiritual digestion. On the contrary, he burns with great gusto any of his subjects who *do* doubt, provided, that is, they let their doubts become known. But all at once the king, who has been married eighteen years, and to one of the most exemplary of wives—a woman to whom, perhaps, the highest compliment might be paid that could be paid to any of her sex, that she was beyond even his power to find fault with—this king is suddenly smitten with an uneasy consciousness that he ought not to have wedded her, because she had been previously married to his early deceased brother. True, he *had* married the young and beautiful widow; true, he had obtained Papal dispensation for so doing; true, the marriage had been solemnly recognized by the Parliament and people of England; true, that not a soul ever dreamed of disturbing such a marriage, or raising a question about it. What then? Henry's was a tender conscience, and the thought once entered in, he could not, unhappy prince that he was, get rid of it. Of course every child now knows the secret cause, and laughs at the hypocritical pretence: it was "the gospel light from Bullen's eyes" that now began to shed their rays upon the king's previously darkened soul, and show to him the error of his ways, and appeal, most eloquently to him, to amend these ways for the future. According to the theory we have spoken of, we may conclude that if Anne Bullen would have only consented to be Henry's mistress, Henry would have let his wife alone; and, instead of reforming a nation's religion in order to get his own individual divorce, would have busied himself in the exactly opposite direction, by rooting out Protestant

heresy wherever he could find it, and so erecting England into a sort of dam against the spiritual waters that Luther was letting loose upon the world. We fear those who think so can have little studied the great under-currents of the waves of national life; can have but little comprehension of the eternal laws of truth, and justice, and harmony that rule the world, however concealed for a time their outward and superficial manifestations may be. Life is not the lottery such theories make it; and least of all national life. The truth of the matter we believe to be this:—In every community the real ultimate leaders are the intelligent, the earnest, the brave. By the time of Wycliffe many of these classes had began to think about, and to feel keenly upon, the many obvious abuses and corruptions of the Church. Wycliffe spoke what they thought, and his words were like torches among the dry brushwood of a forest in the Indian prairie: there was a grand and far-reaching blaze; and for a moment all England—that is, all thoughtful, earnest, and brave England—saw vividly the truth of its own and the Church's position. Chaucer deepened the impression thus made. Reaction from this sudden, and, as it were, spasmodic effort, threw back the movement, after their time; but the seed had been scattered, and grew, now here, now there, silently in men's hearts; and their religious life took a deeper tint, and there was a looking forward, and upward, vaguely for some new state; and martyrs from time to time went to the stake, and so testified to all men there was a something deeper, and stronger, and holier than the world could give or take away; and that that mysterious and sublime power, whatever it might be, was in antagonism to existing modes and faiths; and then came, as we have said, the Printing Press, to help, in a thousand ways, to make men know more and think more (Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" was one of the works that issued from the Caxton press); and lastly, there was before the eyes of all such persons, a Church revelling, as it were, in the very excess of all those things that were beginning to give so much displeasure: in its devotion to temporal things (Wolsey, for instance, surpassed in this respect all that his most ambitious predecessors had ever dreamed of, Becket included);—in its audacious claim for immunity from the common responsibilities of English citizens (Hunne's case was deeply mixed up with this old, yet ever new question);—in its passionate maintenance of rights of sanctuary for cut-throats and vagabonds of every kind;—in its processions, pilgrimages, ceremonies, and saint-worship, all carried to

the extremest points of splendour, display, and expense ;—in its treatment of the Bible, unstudied by the clergy themselves, who alone had the right and opportunity to study it, and denied to the masses, who were secretly yearning to handle its sacred and as yet mysterious pages. With these facts, and with martyrdom for all who ventured to doubt the beliefs that had (apparently) led to them ; and with the midnight assassin-for more worldly opponents, as in Hunne's case ; and with Luther's mighty voice thundering over Europe, and compelling the attention of all Christian men, how could a Reformation have been longer delayed, whether Henry had or had not grown tired of his wife ? No : doubtless the movement might not have gone on so fast, had it waited for some other incident, or complication of incidents, to set it going ; but it is equally open to speculation whether it might not have gone on much faster, or at all events less bloodily, and with less chances of reaction. No, it is the misfortune, not the fault of the Reformation, that it must in a certain sense date from Henry VIII. ; but in no real, living, inner sense was he the cause of it. We should ourselves rather say he was, even while favouring it for his own purposes, its worst enemy ; and that the stains that rest upon it are in a great degree all traceable to his bloody and impure hand. Let us now glance at the leading facts of this mighty revolution ; premising that our readers must not forget for an instant that we are not writing, even in the merest outline, a history of religion in England, but recalling the chief of those events out of which have risen, like the flower from the seed, the precious, and lovely, and sweet smelling growth that we call religious liberty.

Henry saw Anne Bullen, tempted her, and soon found there was one only condition that would make her his—a crown ; and from that moment there cannot be a rational doubt that all his policy, whether secret or avowed, was directed to the attainment of an end that a man with a spark of honour would have said was impossible. But Katharine, his wife, was beginning to lose somewhat of her early beauty, and she had no male child ; while the maid of honour was eminently attractive, and might, if she became his queen, give him the successor he so ardently desired. The first adviser of the divorce is supposed to have been Cardinal Wolsey, the man who had risen from the very humblest social position (he was the son of a butcher) to be the exemplar of all that was most magnificent in personal wealth and taste, most imposing in state and retinue, most potential in political influence



and administrative government ; a man who, even among the proud nobles of England, moved like a being of an altogether superior order. In considering how such a man could have obtained, and so long maintained, the royal favour, we think much stress may be laid on the fact of the secret pleasure and pride with which a king, like Henry, would look upon all the splendour and ostentation of Wolsey ; how he would even take pleasure in adding to it more and more, when he could say to



CARDINAL WOLSEY, FROM DRAWINGS BY HOLBEIN.

himself, " And this man, so haughty to others, even to the haughtiest, is *my* servant, obsequious always to me—ay, this is indeed to be a king !"

Wolsey, we repeat, is said to have first suggested the divorce ; but we utterly disbelieve that any man would have dared to breathe a word on a subject at once so wicked and so dangerous, except *after* full perception of what was wanted. Then, no doubt, an unscrupulous adviser might and would do so, fully conscious that his royal master

would wish, of all things, to be able to say to himself—perhaps to others—it was not he who first began to think of so terrible an alternative—oh, no; he thought only of the sin he feared he had unwittingly committed against the canons of the Church. But once the door opened to the reception of so important an idea, Wolsey saw that he might make excellent use of it, in the formation of a new marriage and new foreign alliance. But he was soon undeceived on that score; Henry let him understand distinctly that it was none other than Anne Bullen he was thinking of as his future queen. Wolsey was so overpowered at this news, that he actually went on his knees to Henry, to beg him to change his purpose; but discovering that the king was determined, and therefore dangerous if opposed, he veered round, and if he rendered but a lukewarm support, he still did support the iniquitous measure proposed.

It would be amusing to trace the plots that now went on, if it were not for the difficulty of shutting one's eyes, even for an instant, to the detestable sensuality and injustice that pervaded them; plots having for their aim to prepare the public mind for the divorce, and obtain from the Church, and especially from the Pope, the desired sanction. Bishops and divines were asked to give their opinion, and they sagely replied—Consult the Pope. Sir Thomas More was sounded, who said, with equal shrewdness—Read the writings of the early fathers of the Church. Here and there a kind of hesitating acknowledgment was drawn forth, that there *might* be scruples on the ground of the relationship. As to the Pope, no doubt he learned by his private channels of information—possibly from Cardinal Wolsey himself—how Henry's mind was bent upon the scheme, and how dangerous it might be in the then state of the Popedom—Rome itself being in possession of the Imperialists, and the Pope having but just escaped from a Romish prison—to thwart the English monarch; so, putting aside the deep disgrace and humiliation of undoing a marriage that it had itself sanctioned, he gave, in 1527, the two coveted documents—one, a power to Wolsey to grant the divorce; the other, a dispensation to Henry to remarry himself to any woman whatsoever.

Henry must have smiled one of his grimmest but most truthful smiles, as he examined the important instruments, and thought the rest would be only form and ceremonial, such as was due, for decency sake, to the world, to the Queen, and to his own character. There is, accordingly, held an imposing meeting in the hall of Blackfriars, on the last

day of May, 1529. Wolsey sits there in state, and by his side Campeggio, the legate of the holy see. Henry sends his proxy; but where is the party who is so deeply concerned? Where is the royal lady who is to be struck down, not merely from a throne, but from the side of the husband to whom she has been a loving and exemplary wife for eighteen years? She will not come. The court is adjourned to the 21st of June, that fresh influences may be brought to bear upon her. That day she does appear, and so does Henry. "Come," he thinks, "we shall get the business done now—a few tears perhaps, a solemn decision, and there's an end." But see—she takes no notice of their forms and their judgments. She knows well what is intended. With the dignity alike of a woman and of a queen, outraged in both capacities, she makes one last public appeal—ay, on her knees—to her king and husband, and does this tenderly as regards his feelings and conduct, even while with pathetic eloquence she reviews the injustice of the entire proceedings against her. She ends by desiring to consult her friends in Spain, and by committing her cause to God. She then walks out of the court, and never again acknowledges in any way the jurisdiction of her hostile judges. Let us finish her story at once. Worn out with anguish, she died in 1536; and on her death-bed sent to request her former husband to comfort her with a sight of her child—their child—Mary (afterwards the Queen), but it is refused, and so—she has done with life.

"I must to bed:

Call in more women.—When I am dead, good wench,  
Let me be used with honour: strew me over  
With maiden flowers, that all the world may know  
I was a chaste wife to my grave. Embalm me,  
Then lay me forth. Although unqueen'd, yet like  
A queen and daughter to a king, inter me.  
I can no more."

So does the people's historian, William Shakspeare, describe the last hours of the noble-hearted Katharine; the first victim of the religious scruples of King Henry VIII., to whose movements, after the meeting in Blackfriars, we must now return.

Katharine's refusal to acknowledge the court was, doubtless, annoying to him; he not only wanted his own way, but he wanted everybody to acknowledge his way the right way. But a far greater obstacle now threatened. The Pope was getting out of his political difficulties: he knew, of course, quite well, what everybody else knew,

that Anne Bullen had leanings towards the new heresy ; so he revoked the sanction he had given, Campeggio hurried back to Rome, and left Henry furious. Wolsey was the first to experience the consequences. The King believed him secretly unfavourable to the proposed marriage, and disgraced him. Wanting all real strength, all true fortitude, Wolsey sank with more striking rapidity than he had risen ; and he, who but now appeared the foremost man of all this world (below the rank of crowned heads), died, of a broken heart apparently, while under arrest, and on his way to London.

Henry thus lost at once his chief religious and chief political adviser ; he was soon to be very efficiently supplied in both directions. He was told one day the particulars of a certain conversation at a supper-table, which amazingly interested Henry, who was now lost in perplexity as to the *how* and the *when* of the divorce, and the marriage that lay beyond that divorce. At this said supper, a grave and learned man had expressed his opinion that the only way to settle the tedious question of the divorce, was to have it discussed by learned and holy men on the sole authority of the Bible, and without further reference to the Pope. Henry caught up the words, and, charmed with the idea, sent instantly for the author, and, lo ! the beginning of the public career of Cranmer, who soon showed, and to the entire satisfaction of Henry, that the laws of God, as laid down in the Bible, and as confirmed by the fathers of the Church, did not permit a man to marry his brother's widow. It was not long before Cranmer became the King's chief religious adviser ; and was, then, in a position to support, if he were inclined to do so, the new doctrines, which it was believed he secretly favoured.

Henry was equally fortunate in replacing his political confidant. Wolsey had a secretary, called Thomas Cromwell ; and be it said, in passing, to Cromwell's honour, that however much he owed in fact to his master's fall, he does not seem to have contributed in any way to it ; while he does, on the other hand, appear to have exhibited a manly sympathy and bearing towards the disgraced minister. While Henry and the courtiers were still wavering (for the Papal difficulty *was* an alarming one, that must be acknowledged ; for here the Pope was obviously in the right), while all was indecision and perplexity, Cromwell asked an audience of the King, and then said, in effect, that the ministers were too much in awe of vulgar opinion, that the best way would be to deny the Pope's authority altogether, and rest on the favourable

opinion of the English universities (which had been obtained with extreme difficulty, let us observe, and probably only through much fraud and intimidation), and on the confirmation that the English Parliament could doubtless be brought to give. Henry saw at once this was the man for him. Cromwell proceeded with even greater boldness to throw out a still more potent lure. He recommended the King to follow the German princes who had received the new religion, *and to declare himself the supreme head of the Church*. Henry, he said, was only half a King, being as he was; whereas bishops and clergy ought to be dependent wholly on the crown, and hold nothing from the Pope. Never did ears drink in more greedily delicious counsel than Henry, as he listened to Cromwell. What! be himself, in effect, Pope over England, as he was already King! That was an idea indeed! And this was a man whom Kings might well delight to honour. Cromwell became minister, and the prime mover in the whole subsequent business of the Reformation.

That Cromwell was prepared to do as well as to talk, when the opportunities of office were afforded to him, he gave a signal proof in one of his first measures. As it was quite plain that the English clergy would not as a body concur in furthering the divorce in opposition to the Pope, they were, by an Act which one cannot but admire for its almost sublime audacity, suddenly turned into so many criminals—they were declared to be all involved in a *præmunire*, as abettors of Wolsey in his quality of Papal Legate. Of course the ludicrous inconsistency of this conduct on the part of the King, who had actually sanctioned, nay, in a measure originated, Wolsey's appointment, did not in the least trouble Henry. He only seems to have thought what a capital stroke of policy it was on the part of his minister; how it would bring everybody into subjection; and how he might manage to extract something besides the end desired, from the threatened clergy before setting their minds at ease. They were given to understand that a round payment in money, as well as an acknowledgment of the King as "protector and only supreme head of the Church and clergy," would be accepted in expiation. They were frightened, as Henry and Cromwell expected they would be, and gave both money (£100,000) and title, reserving only the condition annexed to the latter, "as far as may be by the laws of Christ."

Let us here observe that the denial of the Pope's position as head of the Church, supposing him to confine himself to purely religious matters, was by no means an act that we are prepared to point to as

*necessary* to the cause of religious liberty, while *England remained Catholic*, or as even just; while it seems very certain that for a king to take upon himself the care of spiritual things, was likely to be attended by as many evils, and open to as many inherent objections as the former state of things had been when the Pope claimed temporal power. But that brings one to the connection of Church and State—a question which even in our own time remains unsolved, and will require for its due settlement, much wise thought, and much Christian forbearance and charity on all sides. But, in any case, men like Cromwell *must* have seen, and men like Cranmer doubtless were glad to see, that the inconsistency of Henry's position as a Catholic, denying the spiritual supremacy of his own head, was only to be got rid of by ceasing to be Catholic; and so another motive-power was added to the mighty progress of the Reformation.

Surely matters were smooth at last? It was necessary of course to tell all to the dutiful House of Commons, and it was even thought advisable to dismiss them to their homes, that they might make known unto the country how just and righteous was the King's policy. And when they returned there were some other matters that it was thought it would be well to finish out of hand before the King would yet venture the last step, and take his costly prize. There was still (1532) a considerable payment made to the Pope, under the name of first-fruits; that was now abolished. The clergy had still a sort of independent power in their Convocation; and that was annexed to the King. Lastly, Henry, before irrevocably committing himself, strove to bind still more closely the friendly ties that existed betwixt himself and Francis I. of France, and to that end proposed a meeting. He wanted to take his darling Anne Bullen with him, and so proposed to Francis an equivalent privilege that he should bring his favourite mistress too. The French King declined that part of the proposition; and, probably foreseeing the future of Anne Bullen, was wise enough to show to her a greater delicacy than her own lover and intended husband exhibited. At this meeting Francis promised to do his best to persuade the Pope to consent to the divorce, for Henry still hankered after the sanction that had apparently become of no sort of importance to him. But he could and would wait no longer. Between midnight and early morning, of a certain day in January, 1533, Dr. Lee, one of the royal chaplains, was summoned to celebrate Mass at Whitehall. To his astonishment he was led along through passages up to a remote garret, where he pre-

sently found himself surrounded by a small group of persons, who were no other than King Henry VIII. and the Lady Anne Bullen, the former attended by two grooms of the royal bedchamber, the latter by a train-bearer. It did not need words to tell the chaplain that this was no assemblage for Mass, but in fact the marriage party that England had looked for so long. What was he to do? No opposition evidently was expected from him; and perhaps that very fact weakened what courage or determination he might have otherwise been prepared to show. Still it is said, that Henry was obliged to invent a lie, and assure Dr. Lee that the Pope had consented, before he would perform the ceremony. As soon as it was over, the party separated, in a silence and secrecy that well accorded with the time—a little before daylight. It is a significant fact, that the previous marriage had not been formally annulled even by such tribunals as the King himself thought proper to create for the purpose.

Cranmer was raised to the see of Canterbury; and with the mean cunning that Henry so often exhibited, in alternation with a cruel boldness such as the world has seldom seen, the Archbishop was required to take the usual oaths to the Pope, and obtain the usual sanction from him, in order that the very sanction thus obtained might make more potential the measures that Cranmer was now to aid in for the utter destruction of the Papal authority in England. That sanction obtained, Parliament was made to prohibit for ever all appeals to Rome, and to declare Katharine was no longer Queen, but only the dowager Princess of Wales (as the wife of Henry's deceased brother, the Prince of Wales); while Cranmer proceeded to cite the unfortunate lady before a final court, but which she did not know was final. Refusing to come, she was pronounced *contumax*; and then for fifteen days was the mockery of a citation gone through with the same result, till on the 23rd Cranmer pronounced the marriage null and invalid, and five days later announced that Henry was already legally married; and he-sanctioned that marriage with his judicial and pastoral authority.

At last then Henry was at the height of bliss, or ought to have been so, considering what tremendous agencies he had set working to attain the desired goal. But there were bitter drops in the cup, and one cannot repress a certain satisfaction that it was so; for if such great criminals, who are above all ordinary and human justice, do not suffer from God's justice, as manifested in the natural results that spring up in their own body and mind from these very outrages on nature; if

this were not so, one might despair of the future, and become reckless indeed as to the present. These are but some of the poison drops Henry had to taste:—The Pope solemnly annulled Cranmer's judgment, and excommunicated the royal pair; and public opinion went very much with the former and not with the latter. "Nan Bullen," so the people called her, became as odious from one end of the country to the other, as Katharine became more and more dear to the national heart for her unmerited sufferings. And there were men who dared even to stand before the mighty King himself, face to face, and tell him what they thought. That Friars were not all of them men such as Wycliffe abhorred, and Chaucer held up to good-humoured satire, let the following incident prove:—One Peto, a simple, devout man, preached before the King at Greenwich, and took for his text the story of Ahab, saying, "Even where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, even there shall the dogs lick thy blood, O king!" He then spoke of those who had deceived the King, and continued: "I am Micheas [Micaiah] whom thou wilt hate, because I must tell thee truly that this marriage is unlawful; and I know I shall eat the bread of affliction and drink the water of sorrow, yet because our Lord hath put it into my mouth, I must speak of it." Perhaps there is a spell in courage like this akin to the power said to be possessed by the eye when fixed steadily on wild animals; at all events Henry did not viciously spring upon and rend him, but contented himself with having next Sunday a very different kind of preacher, one Dr. Curwen, who abused poor Peto with all the foulest epithets he could collect, and ended by saying, "I speak to thee, Peto, . . . but now thou art not to be found, being fled for fear and shame," etc. But a monk starts up in the wood-loft, one Elstow, and tells the sycophant preacher that he knows well that Peto is gone to a council at Canterbury, whither he had been ordered to go, and then challenged Curwen, offering at the risk of his life to prove the truth of all Peto had said. "I challenge thee before God and all equal judges; even unto thee, Curwen, I say it, which art one of the four hundred prophets into whom the spirit of lying is entered, and seekest *by adultery to establish succession*, betraying the King into endless perdition, more for thine own vainglory and hope of promotion than for the discharge of thy clogged conscience and the King's salvation." So went on the brave friar, till Henry himself shouted out a vehement command that he should hold his peace. Next day the two friars were brought before a council and severely rebuked. The Earl of Essex said



they deserved to be thrown in a sack into the Thames. One of them, Elstow, smiled in reply, and said with a grand spirit of heroism, that ought never to be forgotten while English history exists:—"Threaten these things to rich and dainty folk, which are clothed in purple and fare deliciously, and have their chiefest hope in this world, for we heed them not; but are joyful that for the discharge of our duties we are driven hence: and thanks to God, we know the way to heaven to be as ready by water as by land, and therefore care not which way we go." The friars were banished shortly after; while Dr. Curwen was made a bishop. That they were only banished, was probably owing to Henry's secret desire to be yet reconciled in some fashion to the Pope. He had obtained all he really wanted; and if the Papacy had shown some of that subtle worldly-wise policy now which it exhibited on so many other occasions, Henry would have stopped short, and tried hard, by the aid of the sword and the stake, to make every one else do the same. But his advisers, Cranmer and Cromwell, knew well how inestimable an opportunity was now afforded for the growth of a reformed religion; and both, though probably from different motives, considered it their bounden duty to seize that opportunity, and make the very most of it. Cranmer, though ever temporizing, was not the less ever advancing toward a deeper and higher conviction of the truth of the new faith; and Cromwell's sagacious, statesman-like eye, not only saw the danger of going back, on account of the possible sacrifices of religious and civil liberty that would result from the restoration of the Papal influence in this country, but he may even have seen, from a variety of indications, that such retrogression was not even possible. There is a kind of freemasonry of the intellect, which makes superior men readily, and almost silently, understand each other's mind and purposes; and it is more than probable that Cromwell knew there was a wide-spread and deeply-rooted conviction in the minds of all the moving spirits of the time that a change was impending—was inevitable; and it is such convictions, when held by such men, that put the finishing touch to the mightiest resolves of state policy. If we study the events of this critical period in Henry's reign, we shall perceive a decision, an exactitude, and a promptitude of purpose, that could only spring from men who knew perfectly well what they wanted, and how to shape events so as to produce the desired results. There is, for instance, a kind of dramatic felicity and effect perceivable in the simultaneous execution of two sets of measures, by

two great bodies, one composed of the pillars of the Romish Church, sitting at Rome, the other being the Parliament of England, assembled at Westminster, and both in March, 1534. By the former it was decided that the King's marriage with Katharine was valid and indissoluble (a sort of last word of the Church); and by the latter (as their last word, in practical reply) a series of bills was carried, which proposed to finally abolish the Papal power in England.

" If we have found it impossible, while following the current of events, to avoid bearing harshly on men whose names and memories are still dear to our Catholic brethren, we trust we have more than once shown that it is not in any way owing to our desire to attack the Catholic religion itself, or to lessen the influence which belongs so very justly to many of its most eminent votaries. If we had done so, we should feel rebuked in the presence of the illustrious shade that now rises before us, bearing the name and lineaments of



SIR THOMAS MORE, FROM AN ETCHING BY WIERX, AFTER HOLBEIN.

Would we could dwell longer on his story than our space will permit. We need not speak of his learning, his eloquence, his wit, his literary eminence, or the sweet domestic life which the charming biography, by his son-in-law, has made famous. But we may remind casual readers that Henry professed—apparently with truth, so far as his nature allowed it to be true—great personal affection and friendship for the illustrious Chancellor. What the affection and friendship were worth, was now to be shown. The King, to make all safe, under the new arrangement of things, determined that oaths of allegiance should be taken to the new Queen and her heirs, to the exclusion of Mary, the daughter of Katharine. The aged Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More were in consequence called upon. They did as was desired, and rightly, Parliament having led the way. But when they were also required to approve the marriage itself, and declare Katharine's unlawful, and swear that Rome had no power to grant the dispensation she had actually granted, they naturally, as honest men, demurred: King and Parliament could determine a line of succession and a policy, but they could not change black into white, or turn truths into falsities; so they objected, and were both cast into prison. Will it, can it be believed, that in this England of ours, this land of civilization, only three centuries ago, that such prisoners, for such offences, could be treated as these men were? Bishop Fisher, then seventy-six years old, was ill at the time, and in pain, yet he was left without sufficient clothes to cover him, or enough food to eat. Sir Thomas More would have been in the same condition but for the active love and practical heroism of his favourite daughter, Margaret Roper. But the question that was to seal the fate of both, as well as of many less illustrious victims, was the oath of supremacy, which the obsequious and frightened Parliament authorized the King to enforce. By this Henry was declared supreme head of the Church. Neither the Bishop nor the Chancellor would or could take the oath. In fact, no honest and brave Catholic could have taken it then; as no such Catholic ever can take it. While Fisher lay under sentence of death, the Pope, with cruel kindness, or at least most inconsiderately, sent him a cardinal's hat: "Ha!" cried Henry, when he heard of it, "Paul may send him the hat; I will take care he have never a head to wear it on." A few days later the head of the venerable and amiable bishop was seen, a gory spectacle, stuck upon London Bridge. Sir T. More soon followed his friend. We all know the touching circumstances of his sentence

and death: the meeting with his daughter on the Tower wharf, when she forced her way through the halberdiers and right into his arms—the parting—and yet the second rush to embrace each other, through the weeping crowd. And then subsequently the flashes of wit that shone out so brilliantly and playfully in the gloom of the dungeon, and amid the horrors of the scaffold: all betokening, we think, that More had passed the sense of the bitterness of death, and was enjoying that peace which passeth all understanding, as he felt he had done his duty bravely and heroically; and that he was then asserting before all mankind the rights of conscience; which we know, even better than he did, are the foundation of all rights to religious liberty. He was told that Henry had mercifully spared him the hanging, drawing, and quartering; he was only to be beheaded: “God preserve all my friends from such royal favours,” was his quiet reply. The scaffold was weakly built, and fears were expressed of its giving way: “See me safe up,” said Sir Thomas to the Lieutenant, “and for my coming down let me shift for myself.” When he laid his head upon the block, his beard was in the way, so he made the headsman pause, remarking, with a smile, that one would have thought would have unsettled even a hangman’s nerves—“My beard has never committed any treason.” This hideous murder—out of which, however, shone a spiritual beauty, more than sufficient to make men love to reflect upon the victims, and hate with increased abhorrence the royal murderer—took place on the 6th of July, 1535. When these particulars, and others equally significant, reached Henry, we may be sure he, too, had his punishment; and probably, in the real mental states of the two men, it was More who was the sentencing judge; the King, the tortured criminal.

The people generally were too much alarmed to disobey; and the clergy swore to all sorts of things utterly irreconcilable with their position as members of a Roman priesthood. Erasmus tells us that Englishmen were, in fact, now placed under such a reign of terror, that they durst not write to foreigners, nor receive letters from them. The King had become his own Pope; but as that involved an enormous amount of work, he appointed Cromwell his vicar-general, who became the head of a separate department, established for the management of Church affairs. A decided advance toward Protestantism now took place. The seven sacraments (Henry had made himself an author in order to defend these against Luther, and it was his book which had won for him from the grateful Pope the title, Defender of the

Faith) were now reduced to three—Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Penance. The adoration of images was forbidden; many saints' or holy-days were abolished, especially such as fell in harvest time, so that Henry, like Cowper's more humble hero, John Gilpin, had a frugal mind in the midst of his amusements—for the Reformation was, after all, frequently but a kind of bloody toy in his hands wherewith he amused his disputatious mind; the Bible, and the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds were declared the sole standards of faith. Parish priests were to expound these in plain English to their parishioners; and to facilitate the use of the Bible, an English version, Coverdale's, was ordered to be printed, and one supplied to every church. These were measures worthy of Cromwell, and which go far to counterbalance much of Cromwell's unscrupulous rapacity, and waste of English blood and treasure in patiently following the moods of his terrible master. Still casting about to see where there was work to be done in the name of the Reformation, that would be pecuniarily profitable in the doing, the suppression of the religious houses was next determined upon. One can hardly realize a due sense of the boldness of the minister who could propose or carry into effect such a stupendous measure. The monastic life had become entwined in so many ways with the life of England—the poor were so largely dependent upon the religious houses that were spread thickly over the whole country—education benefited so greatly by the schools attached to them—they were so wealthy, so influential in all social questions, and the number of their inhabitants so great, that their disappearance would in itself form a mighty revolution. But it was done on pretence of the corrupt lives of the monks; we say pretence, because the end showed there was no discrimination, or real intention to discriminate, between the communities which were and those which were not guilty. Wolsey had led the way, and first excited Henry's cupidity. Cromwell now advanced—suppressing some of the lesser monasteries in 1536, some of the larger ones in 1537, and finally destroying the whole in 1540, when their broad lands were divided among the courtiers and parasites. It makes one at once melancholy and indignant to see in what a spirit of lust—the lust both of plunder and of cruelty—this measure was carried out; how brutally reckless were the authors of the feelings of the still Catholic people of England; how regardless of the sudden misery into which they were plunging so many thousands of the men and women who knew no other life or mode of existence than the cloister and the sacred

walls afforded. The Commons of England did show some unwillingness in the matter; but Henry warned them he would have the desired bill or their heads, and so he quieted them, and made them docile. And monks and nuns were dismissed to beggary or to starvation; where they did not happen, as was the case with many of their superiors, to be selected to grace the scaffold. The poor, in countless thousands, were also plunged into sudden and absolute destitution; for the monastic institutions had become in effect their poor-law. Noble libraries were broken up, and their contents scattered over the world, sometimes in ship-loads, to be used as waste-paper, or for any the vilest purposes; gems of Italian statuary and paintings were broken up and burnt; church bells sold; horses and cattle stalled in the shrines and chapels. But pained as all true-hearted and intelligent men must have been to see these things going on, they had, or had been taught to have, one consolation: the wealth thus obtained would almost render the government independent of any more taxation, and unheard of blessings were to fall on the promoters of religion and education, in the way of fresh aid and appliances. Alas, for all these dreams! six new bishopricks, so wretchedly endowed that their holders could scarcely support themselves decently, and a few of the monastic buildings transformed into cathedrals and churches—these were all the products that England was to reap for the amazing amount of treasure and the enormous extent of land obtained through the dissolution of the monasteries. And as if to supply the eternal farce that the King had the knack of annexing to his every tragedy, he actually demanded from Parliament compensation for the expenses he had been put to in reforming the State; and *he got it*. As to education, innumerable schools were closed never again to be opened; and as to religion, the stipend received by the pastors, at this time, was so low, that none but the poorest would accept, and many of these were fain to supplement their income by earnings from a different source; Latimer says they frequently kept the village ale-house. Even the Bible itself that had been ordered was not paid for by the State; and the printers were obliged to levy a high charge on each copy to remunerate themselves, and so to check the circulation.

It was not likely that the Catholics of England would be quiet under all this treatment; much of it having no sort of justification. So insurrections broke out in 1536, at first in Lincolnshire, where 20,000 men appeared in arms; and next in the Northern Counties,

where double that number of men, calling themselves the Pilgrims of Grace, moved to and fro threateningly for a time; but they all failed, and a bloody vengeance was taken upon the leaders. A similar attempt in 1541 fared no better. The fact was, the gulf between the past and the future policies of England—the Catholic and the Reforming parties—was too deep and broad to allow of any common united action; and wanting that, the King was sure to succeed. He was himself still a Catholic; though from the force and temptation of circumstances, and especially through the pleasure he took in playing at providence, as it were, over men's souls and bodies, he went with the Protestants; and then, annoyed perhaps at this inconsistency, revenged himself by burning to-day the members of one party, and to-morrow those of the other, with a kind of impartiality that savours of the ludicrous—if there were any possibility of a human intellect experiencing such emotion, while tracking Henry's course of butchery. The very actors in, or instruments of, these executions seem to have noticed and appreciated the spectacle of such sublime inconsistency, and to have done their best to show it worthily to the world by coupling together Catholic and Protestant on the same hurdle. A Frenchman who on one occasion saw this, exclaimed, "Good God, how do people make a shift to live here where Papists are hanged, and anti-Papists are burned!" The Papists were treated as traitors, by maintaining the Pope's supremacy, and therefore hanged; but the hanging was accompanied by such revolting details as sickened the very hearts of England to hear of. The Reformers were burned for heresy, England being still, in Henry's mind, a Roman Catholic country; and they being guilty of the unpardonable crime of advancing in a Protestant direction, before he had made up his mind whether they, and all, should or should not so advance. His policy was, in fact, a perpetual see-saw, and changed from day to day as circumstances suggested. For instance, he received at one time a Protestant deputation from Germany, who came by his consent to try to form with him an intimate alliance; but they *were* Protestants, real ones, and were determined to have Protestant concessions, which they explained to him. But he, on his side, wanted to teach them; had he not been defender of the faith before? Was he not now Head or Pope of the English Church? So the affair broke off, and Henry, as he could not have his own way with one party, turned instantly to the other. Romish nobles and prelates were recalled to the court and to power; and among these rose in lurid pre-eminence, Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, who had been

long and eagerly watching to guide the King back to the old faith, just as Cranmer had tried to urge him on toward the new. A single glance at the features of this man reveals the mingled craft and



BISHOP GARDINER, FROM A PAINTING BY HOLBEIN.

cruelty of his character. In him we see a fitting representative of that piece of English legislation ever infamous in the annals of the Progress of Religious Liberty—the Six Articles, or the Bloody Statute, as the popular voice, with its usual straightforwardness in designation, called them. By these articles it was declared, first, that the bread and wine of the eucharist were really the present natural body and blood of Christ; and that any one who opposed it by dispute, preaching, or writing, should be burned as a heretic, *without even a chance of recantation being allowed*. In these last words we perceive the new stimulant to Henry's imagination that Gardiner was able to administer, and



which outstripped in ferocious cruelty even the furious Inquisition itself, which allowed one recantation. The other articles declared that the communion under both heads was not necessary to salvation; that priests could not marry, and must separate from their wives, if they had married, and be punished as felons if they again cohabited; that vows of chastity must be observed, no matter by whom made; and that priests and nuns violating this law were to suffer imprisonment and forfeiture for one offence, and death on the second; that private masses were essential; that auricular confession is expedient and necessary. Cranmer did his best, in a quiet way, to resist the passage of the law, but he did not resign after it had passed, as Latimer and others did. As if to show to what depths of base subserviency the Parliament had sunk, it declared that the King's proclamations should have the force of law, so that he could stretch or narrow their measures as he pleased, even after they had given whatever of actual law he thought proper to ask; and they also made it high treason even to attempt to leave the kingdom to escape the awful penalties that parties at such a time might expose themselves to.

It was probably to avert the dangers he saw impending to himself in such a state of things, that Cromwell tried to gain the ear and favour of the King once more, by pleasant fancies about a new marriage after the death of Jane Seymour. Anne of Cleves was the lady selected; and doubtless if she had been more to the King's taste, Gardiner and his party would have received a severe, perhaps final check; but after all the arrangements were made, the King at the very first sight of his bride was disgusted; and though he married her in fear of offending her Protestant connections, he soon divorced her in favour of another wife; and in revenge sent Cromwell, his hard-working, much trusted, ever submissive, but always able minister to the scaffold, on the charge of heresy and treason. This was in 1540. We need not dwell on the sad story of the many noble men and women who at one time and another fell under the claws of their hideous monster-king; from the execution of the amiable and learned Bilney, a Protestant, in 1534, up to the execution of the heroic maiden Anne Askew, also a Protestant (what facts in chronology for the author of the Reformation!), in Smithfield in 1545, there was seldom any great pause in the march of the noble army of martyrs, comprising poor men and ministers of state, priests and laity, Catholics, Protestants, and men who dissented from both the predominant creeds, abbots and priests, monks, friars, and

nuns, men and women. As they pass before us, one cannot but uncover the head and bend the knee, and let the tears of pity, and the tender glance of sympathy, and the glow of manly pride, show how we reverence them all, no matter what their errors or differences of belief;—forgiving even the crime, for it was one, that most of them would have burned their opponents if they could, as their opponents burned them; for we can now see that it is to their heroic assertion of the right—and their proof of the power—of conscience over force and suffering of every kind, that men learned the first truth in religious liberty, that the individual conscience *will* be free. And we can now also perceive that the alternate sufferings of the votaries of the opposition creeds were only God's ways of teaching them both the second great truth, that if through bigotry men forget what is due to others, the lesson will come home to themselves sooner or later in an irresistible form. When Henry relieved the world at last of his bloated presence, on that great day of heart-rejoicing, January 28th, 1547, the English people had learned much of these simple but bitter lessons; but not all they were destined to learn; not all, therefore, we may conclude, that it was necessary for them to be taught.

The deep interest that attaches to the subject of the first distribution of the printed Bible, suggests the addition here of certain details and explanations. The rising spirit of Protestantism, and the yearning of the people for a free circulation of the Scriptures, could not be resisted much longer; accordingly, spite of powerful opposition, Cranmer's advice that the King should be petitioned to order an English translation of the Bible, was taken; and Henry, with a secret, malicious joy in the idea of striking so powerful a blow at the Pope, "joined with the power the Queen had in his affections," gave orders for setting about it immediately, and the adoption of a translation made by Miles Coverdale in the preceding year, was advised. Doubts were raised respecting it: so, says Burnet, "Henry ordered divers bishops to peruse it. After they had it long in their hands, he asked their judgment of it. They said there were many faults in it; but he asked upon that, if there were any heresies in it. They said they found none; then, said the King, in God's name let it go abroad among my people." So at last, in 1539, we find the King of England formally delivering the Bible to Cranmer and Cromwell, as the representatives of Church and State, for distribution among the English people; and Cromwell soon issued orders declaring that every incumbent must have a copy of the new





**HENRY VIII. DELIVERING THE PRINTED BIBLE TO CRANMER AND CROMWELL, FOR DISTRIBUTION AMONG THE PEOPLE.**

.. The portraits of Henry and Cromwell are from Holbein that of Cranmer from a painting in Lambeth Palace.

(See page 290.)

Bible chained in a convenient spot within the church, so as to be always accessible to his parishioners. The expense of this proceeding was to be borne equally between the pastor and his flock.

The reign of Edward VI. saw in a very brief time the complete establishment of the reformed religion; the Bloody Statute was repealed, so was the King's power by proclamation; sacraments were to be delivered to the laity; various superstitious customs, such as carrying candles on Candlemas-day, were abolished; images were removed from churches and chapels; rich shrines were, as before, forfeited to the crown; a new order for the administration of the Lord's Supper was proclaimed; the elevation of the host was forbidden; divine service was performed in the English language; clergy were permitted to marry; a reformed liturgy was framed and put into use. And now a general pardon was published; though Gardiner and Bonner his coadjutor (one in every way worthy of him) were sent to prison. Cranmer, on the other hand, became the virtual head of the new religious life of England, and the youthful King's chief adviser. Would we could say he was entirely blameless in the matter of the two solitary executions for heresy of this reign, a Dutchman and a woman; but we fear that even if it be not true that Edward protested, with tears in his eyes, against the execution of the first victim, the woman, it is undeniable that Cranmer could have prevented them had he so determinedly willed.

Again, alas, insurrections in England! And this time no fear of party bias can prevent one saying, they were most unjustifiable ones; and they were punished severely—by the execution of the leaders.

But a new shadow soon overhangs England, and threatens fearfully the fast advancing Reformation, out of which—if men had not yet got, what it was impossible in the state of their minds they should then get, full religious liberty and mutual respect for difference of belief—religious liberty was ultimately to grow. The boy-king dies, and Mary ascends the throne, and after a brief contest with Lady Jane Grey's adherents, remains the uncontested sovereign—and *Roman Catholic*. Bonner and others are liberated; Gardiner becomes Chancellor; Cranmer is sent to the Tower; the Parliament goes toppling over, like an unwieldy vessel, all at once to the other side, and proceeds on the other tack, in obedience to the fresh impulse given; all Edward's religious laws are repealed; again the opposing party tries the defence of insur-

rection, and with no better success ; an embassy is despatched to the Pope to confirm—and display to the eyes of the whole world—the solemn reconciliation of England and the Papacy ; and, above all, the stake is seen again in Smithfield and other places, the accursed fire is relighted—heaven once more darkened by the smoke, and the pure air polluted by the stench of burning human flesh. Or, loaded with chains—bearing so great a weight of iron that they could scarcely stir a limb—human beings were thrown into dungeons, noisome holes, dark and stinking corners. Among the refinements of cruelty, such modes were practised as placing them in stocks with their heels uppermost, or with their legs in the stocks and their necks chained to the wall with gorgets of iron ; others, “ without stool or stone to sit on to ease their woeful bodies,” were thrust into the stocks, fettered, and manacled by the opposite hand and leg. “ Skevington’s Daughter,” or gyves, a famous instrument of torture invented by Sir William Skevington, Lieutenant of the Tower, was employed as contrasting in exquisiteness of physical suffering with the rack ; this acted by compressing the limbs and body, as that operated by distending them ; and their bodies were doubled in these merciless iron engines. No manner of inflicting torture appears to have remained untried ; whipping and scourging, beating with rods and buffetting with fists, thrusting their hands into a candle to try their patience, or to force them to relent, while many perished, “ hunger pined, miserably famished and starved.” Cuthbert Simpson, after being set in a rack of iron for three hours, had his fore fingers bound together, and a barbed arrow pushed between, which was so suddenly withdrawn as to tear the flesh and break the arrow. Finally, he was again racked twice. In this one reign two hundred and seventy-seven persons perished at the stake. Of these, five were bishops, twenty-one divines, eight gentlemen, eighty-four artificers, a hundred husbandmen, servants, and labourers, twenty-six wives, twenty widows, nine unmarried women, two boys, and two infants. One can hardly imagine what two little children could have done to offend these ministers of justice ; but their fate is quite in unison with the spirit of the rest of the persecutions. One, we are told, was whipped to death by Bishop Bonner, while the other, born as the mother burned, was thrown back into the flames. If we add to this list of martyrs, those who died by torture, famine, and imprisonment, we find, according to Lord Burleigh, the entire number to have been about four hundred, and can form

some idea of the price demanded for liberty of conscience during the reign of Queen Mary.

In such a vast sweep of destruction, the chief martyrs become more illustrious than ever before—now while England is receiving the last of these awful lessons—John Rogers dies at Smithfield, Bishop Hooper at Gloucester, Dr. Taylor at Hadleigh, Bishop Ferrar at St. David's, John Bradford and many others at London; then Ridley and Latimer at Oxford; and lastly (though not until Bishop Gardiner has gone to account at the dread tribunal for his share in these transactions), the great head of the English Reformation itself, Archbishop Cranmer; who, temporizing and variable to the last, recanted after sentence; and was then called on to sign one recantation after another, until they amounted to *six*; when Cranmer, who, even in this his weakness, is more to be pitied than condemned, heard, in a sermon which Mary had secretly sent word to her minister Cole to preach, that he *must* die. From that moment the *man* was sunk in the *martyr*, and he resolved to die nobly. They mounted him on a "stage set up over against the pulpit, of a mean height from the ground, in a bare and ragged gown, and ill-favourably clothed, with an old square cap, exposed to the contempt of all men." But he soared then above them and their contempt; he declared solemnly that he renounced the Pope and all his doctrines, he avowed his real faith, and bitterly repented having been led from fear of death to sacrifice that faith and his own conscience by his recantations. It did not suit them to hear too much of this; so they dragged him from his platform, and hurried him away to that ditch which had been the death-scene of Ridley and Latimer five months earlier. While his executioners bound him to the stake, after having stripped him to his shirt, he grew more and more calm. No sound escaped his lips, no worldly cares or thoughts appeared to engage his mind, and he looked Death steadily in the face. So he remained—quiet, impassive—until the flames burned brightly; then he raised his hand—that same right hand which had signed the six recantations, which was now to pay the debt unto his conscience he had thereby incurred—he thrust it boldly into the flame, and after that, even "when the fire raged more fiercely, his body remained as immovable as the stake whereto he was fastened." At length, raising his eyes to heaven, he cried, "Lord, receive my spirit!" and soon expired. So did he show how he had risen in will and mastery of spirit, to entire conquest over the feeble body, and all the natural instincts and prompt-

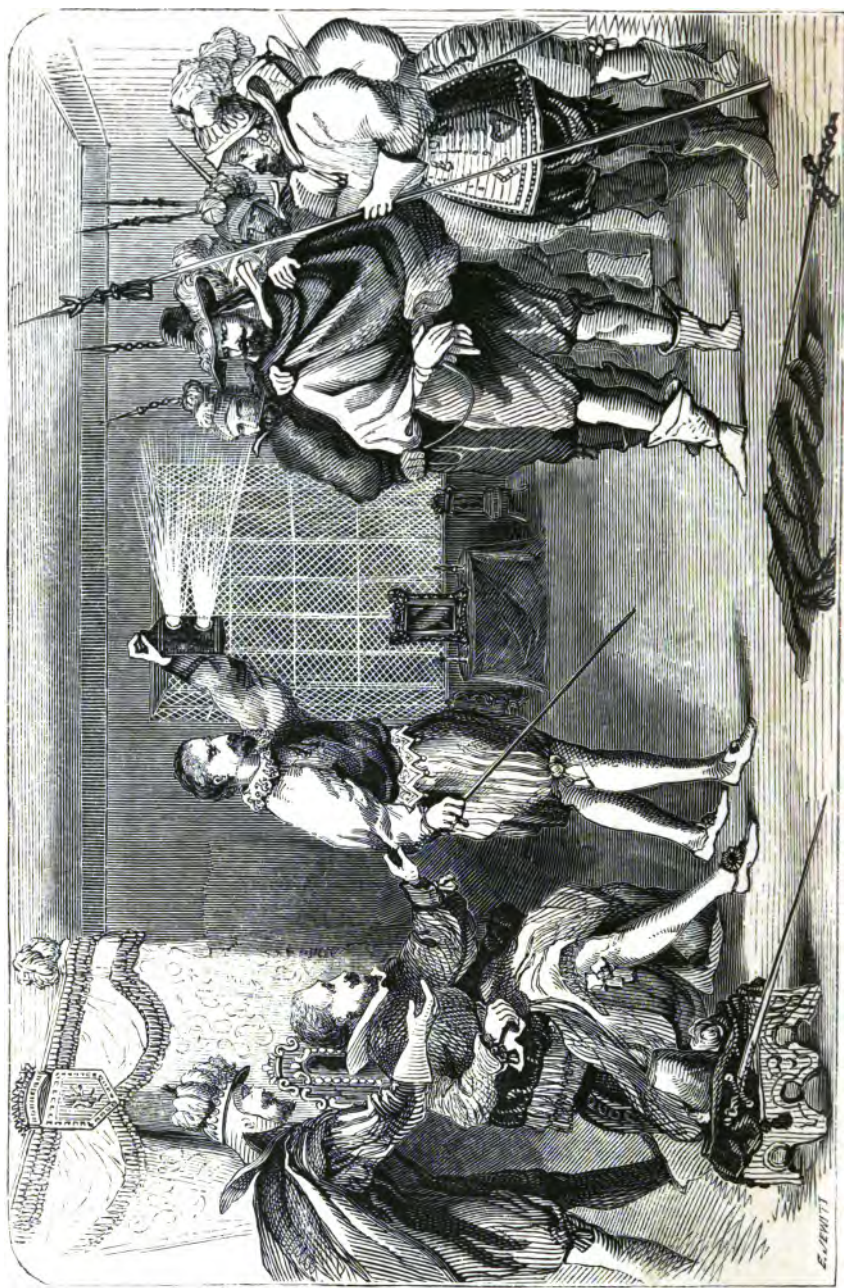
ings that had for a moment led him astray; so did he resolutely win forgiveness for all errors and backslidings, and teach how, even in souls not naturally heroic, the sublimest heroism may grow, where there is a grand cause, and a heart's devotion to it. In killing Cranmer, Mary killed the Romish cause in this country; as was seen when she herself died two years later. England became, under Elizabeth, what she has ever since remained, Protestant. The Reformation was achieved at last.



CRANMER AT THE STAKE.







FAWKES IN THE BED-CHAMBER OF JAMES I.

## CHAPTER III.

### FROM THE REFORMATION TO THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.

PERHAPS the most wonderful feature of what may be called the governmental mind, is its indifference to all future moral consequences, while resigning itself so completely to the influence of immediate, and often temporary, expediences or necessities of state. And the Nemesis comes in the shape of endless trouble, and agitation, and strife; and though existing statesmen may have inherited their worst difficulties from their predecessors, they are themselves, in that respect, only tasting in advance, by a kind of poetical justice, the flavours of the bitter fruit they, too, will persist in rearing for the benefit of those who are to follow them. Undoubtedly, we are improving in this matter. Progress is visible here, as in most other directions. Legislation becomes, almost every year, more apparently conscious of the propriety, not to say necessity, of measuring itself by the standards of the conscience, and the unvarying natural laws of humanity, instead of perpetually looking back to inquire what are the precedents.

A more enlightened government than Elizabeth's has rarely, if ever, existed in England; and the proofs are manifest and glorious. We have here to deal only with the greatest of these proofs, the immediate and complete establishment of the Protestant Church; which was placed on so firm a basis, and supported by such vigorous arms, that from the very first year of Elizabeth's reign, England was lost for ever to the Papacy. Yet, look steadily into that policy, and you will see at a glance, that however bold and sagacious it may have been, in particular ways, it was as blind as any bat in the light of noon, to some of the truths that it most concerned it to know, even for the sake of its own wishes and interests, to say nothing of the lasting interests of the nation at large. Popery was now displaced from the spiritual judgment-seat; and the mighty problem was, how to prevent it from ever resuming its powers. Here was a great population of Catholics and Protestants, mixed inextricably together, and the latter, very possibly

inferior in actual numbers to the former, yet claiming to dominate. Under these circumstances, was it not obvious that the very first law of the Government should have been considerateness, in every possible way, of the feelings and thoughts of the Catholic population, short of undoing Protestantism itself? Faith in the new faith!—Christian charity to those who remained attached to the old faith!—these should have been the watchwords echoing from one end of the land to the other, and to secure which, all the forces of Government should have been put in requisition. The line to be drawn was perfectly clear: The State religion was to be the reformed religion, and, therefore, hierarchical titles, cathedrals, churches, revenues, and (so far as conscience left it possible) the existing body of clergy, were all to belong exclusively to it; and might be legitimately used to propagate, in every possible way, the doctrines and practices of Protestantism. But not a hair's-breadth further, could a Government go without committing revolting injustice, and laying up accumulating troubles for the future. Yet that is precisely what the statesmen of Elizabeth's reign did, even while they saw a different course straight open before them. It is a startling fact, that the absolute change from Mary's Catholic to Elizabeth's Protestant Church Establishment, was only resisted by some eighty parish priests throughout the many thousand parishes of England, and by about a hundred of the higher orders of the clergy. To be at at once, then, firm and conciliatory, was so obviously the duty of men in power, that one can only account for their very different conduct by recollecting the cruelties that had been perpetrated by the Catholics, and especially in Mary's reign; and which, no doubt, had so exasperated the Protestants, that they could not rest without retaliation; or, in other words, without doing exactly to others as those others had done to them—denying the sacred and individual right of conscience. But if such facts explain, they do not justify; while they are absolutely powerless to prevent the evil results that will legitimately flow from such evil causes. It is a melancholy thing to reflect upon, though at the same time one painfully instructive, that the same year, from which we may date in effect the final establishment of our existing Church, the year 1559, is also the year from which we must date the accursed Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity; and which in themselves, or in the legislation that sprung from them, lay, from that time down almost to our own, like great millstones about the neck of England; bowing its form, crippling its strength, and more than once perilling its very life.

To take a single instance:—It is to the legislation of this time, and to that which flowed from it, that we may date no small part of the past misery and disaffection of Ireland; a country that, even to the present hour, tempts the foreign invader by hopes, however delusive, of a glad welcome. And if we Englishmen grow impatient under the burden of our occasionally querulous, and quarrelsome, and unmanageable neighbour, let us remember we have ourselves to thank for it all. We must not only act rightly to Ireland, as we are beginning earnestly to try to do, but we must give her a long time to discover that such is our honest purpose, before we can expect her forgiveness or sympathy. But it will, must come at last.

By the Act of Supremacy, the Catholic was required to acknowledge, by oath, that the English Sovereign was supreme in spiritual as well as in temporal things. No Catholic, as we have before had occasion to say, could take such an oath. If he confined himself simply to a refusal, he merely lost all his rights as a citizen, and was debarred from the possibility of official or other civil functions. But if—taking up the Protestant's own weapon, the right of private judgment—he challenged the idea of the supremacy itself, he committed a highly penal act; possibly a treasonable one; and might, in consequence, go to a traitor's death, with all its hideous barbarities. The equally worthy pendant to this Act, the Act of Uniformity, prohibited, under severe penalties, the use of any but the reformed liturgy; so that Catholics were debarred from the use of their own modes of worship—modes that had been the practice of the Christian Church for ages. And, still further, apparently to irritate and goad them into a half-frenzied resistance, a fine of one shilling was enforced upon every absentee from the Protestant church on Sundays and holidays. We do not hesitate to say, that it was perfectly right for Catholics to resist such legislation by arms—if only they could hope to do so successfully. We cannot conceive any cause—in any time—more nobly justifiable than theirs would have been, if they had said—"We will worship God where and how we please, or we will die in the attempt!" And, had they been prepared to add, "We guarantee, before God and man, the same rights to all others, if we succeed," we firmly believe they would have been successful: not in re-establishing their own faith as England's faith, but in re-establishing it *as theirs*—one to be respected, and let alone. But neither they nor the Protestants—as bodies—could rise yet to the height of that high argument—and so they had both to take the consequences.

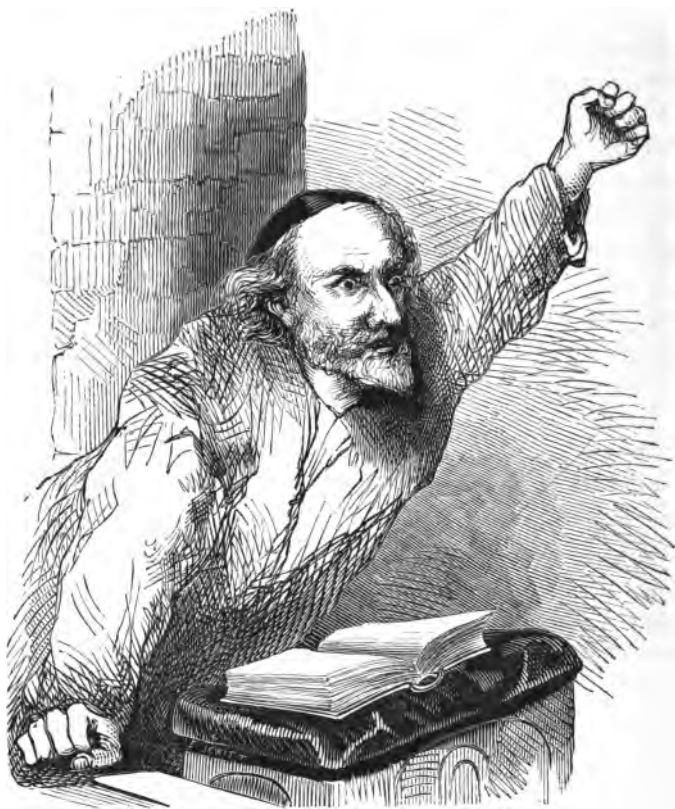
Such laws, however, if rigorously enforced, must have produced instant revolt; but they never were at once rigorously and universally enforced. The heart of England was too kindly for that; its head too clear. But they were the origin of a new series of petty acts of minute, and all but intolerable, persecution; and which were not even accompanied by the semblance of an impartial administration. Catholics of high rank, men who could yet, on emergencies, assemble their hosts of friends and retainers, were allowed to make secret arrangements for divine service in their own homes. Government, in their case, winked at the violation of the law. But the Catholic gentry, who were less personally influential and dangerous, enjoyed no such immunity. Males and females were thrown into prison, while the priests who officiated for them were hunted like wild beasts from covert to covert. Let a reader of to-day reflect but for a moment on such an incident of our history as two Protestant bishops writing in the following style to the Government, concerning a priest who had been taken from a gentleman's house, and who had, doubtless, performed mass for them, probably for a considerable period:—"Some do think, that if this priest might be put to some kind of torment, and so driven to confess what he knoweth, he might give the Queen's Majesty a good mass of money [in fines] by the masses that he hath said." There's a suggestion for pious Protestant bishops to offer to the cupidity of Government! Wonderful, is it not, that Catholics did not flock to the churches over which such holy and kindly men presided? Wonderful, is it not, that Elizabeth should have been haunted, all through her reign, with thick-coming fancies and fears of revolt—assassination—secret plottings—changes of dynasty, etc., etc., when she and her ministers took such great pains to win over and pacify her Catholic subjects?

But there was now growing up another element to deepen and enrich the national life, even while, at first, seeming only to make it more turbid. To Catholicism, the first, and Protestantism, the second, was now to be added a third great religious power—Puritanism—inimical to both, though growing legitimately out of the second, as that had itself grown out of the first. English Puritanism—and that word includes within itself all that has been known in later times under the still larger term of Dissent—originated with Dr. John Hooper, in the reign of Edward VI. Dr. Hooper was, as we have seen, one of the most illustrious of the martyrs of Mary's reign. While travelling in Germany, he learned and sympathized

with the views of Peter Martyr, Bucer, and other foreign religious reformers ; and the result was shown, on his elevation to a bishopric by the youthful Edward, in Dr. Hooper's refusal to wear the usual canonical habit during the ceremony of consecration, which he looked upon as a relic of Romanism. He yielded, after a long delay ; but his hesitation, protracted for nearly twelve months, caused, no doubt, universal conversation on the subject ; thence thought ; thence opinion (clear, definite and determined, and in opposition to the practices of the Reformed Church as established) ; and, lastly, act. Elizabeth's attention appears to have been formally called to the question of this new reform within the Reformation, by a paper showing how certain of her clerical subjects were behaving themselves in connection with religious worship. "Some," it is stated, "perform divers service and prayers in the chancel, others in the body of the church ; some in a seat made, some in a pulpit with their faces to the people ; some keep precisely to the order of the book ; some intermix psalms in metre ; some say with a surplice, and others without one. The table stands in the body of the church, in some places ; in others it stands in the chancel, north and south ; in some places the table is joined, in others it stands upon tressels ; in some the table has a carpet, in others none. Some administer the communion with surplice and cap, some with surplice alone, others with none ; some with chalice, others with a communion cup, others with a common cup ; some with unleavened bread, and some with leavened. Some receive standing, others kneeling, others sitting ; some baptize in a font, some in a basin ; some sign with the sign of the cross, others sign not ; some minister in a surplice, others without ; some with a square cap, some with a round cap, some with a button-cap, some with a hat ; some in scholar's clothes, some in others."

Practically two great bodies were soon recognized : the Conformist, who conformed to, or accepted, the Established Church as by governmental wisdom arranged ; and the Nonconformist, who could not, or would not do so ; although, after a time, the word Puritan was generally accepted to express all those who demanded a purer ritual than the Church possessed, which still retained much of the old Catholic ceremonials, and discipline, and spirit. It was in England, as we shall presently see, that the Puritan element was to rise to its highest points of power and success. But it was in Scotland that it first manifested itself in any extraordinary phase

of strength and warning. The mother of Mary Queen of Scots was then regent of the country, and she strove with all her might to resist the inflowing tide of Protestantism, and preserve the old faith; but she and her Government were but as lost and wandering fragments of wreck upon the raging sea, when John Knox raised all Scotland with his religious fury, when he preached and fulminated with a power, and passion, and altogether resistless effect over



KNOX IN THE PULPIT.

men's hearts and minds, that made him the beacon, and refuge, and support of all the more earnest and determined spirits of his country who accepted the new belief. Imbued to the core with the tenets and spirit of Calvin, no idea of compromise could arise to disturb the motives of such a man. Down with the Papacy! Down with the idols! Down—and for ever—with everything that in the least degree resembled the worship of the Catholic world! These were



the spiritual instincts of Knox, and it must be confessed he did thorough justice to them. There was something like a clean sweep through the land, not only of fonts, pictures, statues, rood-lofts, altars, and all the other accessories of worship, but almost of the very buildings themselves—the churches and cathedrals—that bore upon them the whole visible religious history of the country. Knox plainly avowed his opinion that the best way to prevent the crows from ever returning was to destroy their nests. Iconoclasm had then its hour of triumph. Some of the most beautiful Gothic structures that Christian art had reared were thus lost to us. A Scotch Parliament declared the Roman Church an usurpation, and renounced alike its doctrines and its head the Pope. Mary, the beautiful and unfortunate Mary of history, was by this time Queen; and she tried personally to check the movement—she refused assent to the bill. But she was to account to Knox for her conduct. They meet. Not even her youth, or her loveliness, or her difficulties, or her sovereignty protect her from the iron will and almost savage energy of the reformer chief, who breaks forth into violent language. This is called knocking at her heart, and at all events it makes the unhappy Queen burst into tears. Riots follow, and Mary at last sanctions the establishment in Scotland of the Protestant religion. But from that time, and through all the mazes of State policy, Mary appears to have remained, to some extent, both in her own secret aims and the earnest wishes of many of the Catholics of both countries, *the queen of their future*, and the centre of all their plots; and doubtless it was that fact that ultimately destroyed her.

All this while the fires of Smithfield had ceased. It did appear, at last, that men had learned that if they were still justified in making the life of those who differed from them in religious matters unendurable while it lasted, they still must respect the life itself, so far as to give up the luxury of taking it away by direct violence. And, in fact, no more Catholics appear to have been burned, notwithstanding the provocations of bloody Mary's reign. If Elizabeth executed men because they were Catholics, which, in effect, she certainly did, however the facts were glossed over, she did it on the assumption that they were politically traitors, who had committed themselves by some political act. Jesuits might be tortured until they confessed, or sent to the scaffold when they would not; Campion might be racked "gently," to use the official phrase of the time—(would to Heaven those who used it might but for one instant have tasted the

gentleness, not for vengeance, but for instruction's sake!)—but still Catholics, as Catholics, were no longer supposed to be liable to capital punishment, and they certainly were not burned. But even the hope thus held out was only partially realized. The fires were relighted in Smithfield for the benefit of Dissent. Two German Baptists (Anabaptists they were then called) were burned in 1575: Fox, the historian of the martyrs, protesting, and doing his best to avert such an infamy from the memory of the founders of the Protestant Church, but he was not listened to. They were strangers, they belonged to no formidable body, they had no social rank or influence, therefore no rights, and so they perished. Such was “religious liberty” in the age that finally established Protestantism; its very principle not yet acknowledged even where there could be no fear of any injurious political consequences. It seems like a hideous dream to think of these two Christian men being burned for some mere peculiarity of Christian belief, by an age which had a Queen like Elizabeth, and which produced statesmen like Burleigh, and poets like William Shakspeare. How must all these glories of English life, and character, and achievement, with which we are accustomed to invest the England of that day, have appeared to those two living inhabitants of it, as seen through the smoke and fire that destroyed them? Yet these men were only exhibiting a still more sublime example of the individual heroism, and self-assertion of character, and independent thought, which then made up the greatness of the country—and of the time that treated them so cruelly.

Had the victims been Catholics, we might scarcely have wondered, for only three years before had happened the massacre of St. Bartholomew, in France: an event that showed to the whole world that there was no fear ever held by the most timorous Protestant—no opinion ever maintained by the most bigotted one—as to what the Catholic powers were capable of—that could exceed the reality. Here was murder in its most naked aspect—wholesale murder!—the abandonment of one entire class of the population to instant destruction, under circumstances which showed that there was nothing in the brute creation that could equal men—pious kings, and holy priests—and ministering warriors—either in sudden, treacherous ferocity, or in the maddening thirst for blood, when moved by religious zeal for the sake of their bretheren.

It was this event, probably, that helped to decide the fate of Mary

Queen of Scots ; and that led to the frequent arrests and tortures, and executions of Jesuit priests. But when England was threatened by the Spanish Armada, how did the English Catholics behave ? Why, they vied with the Protestants in their zeal for the defence of the country against the very men who were professedly coming to aid them. They were not to be trusted—naturally enough—with high command ; but their nobles and gentry served as common sailors and soldiers in the fleet. Surely this, and the entire defeat of the Spaniards, ought to have been sufficient to heal all internal dissension, and have given the English Government confidence, and a sense of the necessity and duty of treating the Catholics henceforward simply as—Englishmen. But no ; penal laws continued to press upon that unhappy body of people ; and there was growing up in many a heart and mind secretly a double current of thought—the one saying, “There is no hope of even an approach to justice from the Protestant Government ;” the other whispering—eternally—“Can it not be overthrown ?” And when the strong Queen died, and James of Scotland succeeded her, these thoughts were doubtless strengthened by yet a third—“We shall have only a weak King now to deal with.” And, lastly, this weak King having, before his accession, allowed the Catholics to believe they would be tolerated, broke faith with them, when he had the power to fulfil his implied promises.

The first of the plots that took, or was supposed to have taken, the form of overt act, was a very remarkable one, in two respects. The conspirators wanted Toleration to be established ; so that, at last, a faint, shadowy semblance of the truth was becoming visible. Men were prepared to tolerate—to put up with—their brothers’ creed. That was something. But the still more noticeable fact was, that Catholics and Puritans—brethren in misfortune—now allied to obtain that common desire. At first James was asked to give toleration ; and when that was found to be a vain request, Raleigh and others conspired, were suspected, arrested, and the whole scheme destroyed. It was for his share in this plot, in the year 1603, that Raleigh suffered so many years later, having in the interim been allowed to make his famous voyage in search of gold.

But England was now to hear of a very different act from this ; one that made the blood run cold, as it was narrated in the domestic circles of the country. Yet some such outburst might have been easily foreseen. Men were being driven, by cruelty and despair of relief, into

a morbid state of feeling, out of which any outrage—any crime—might have been naturally anticipated. The last gleam of hope for either Catholics or Puritans, derived from James's accession, had departed. A great meeting of the heads of the Church and of the Puritans took place, at Hampton Court, in 1604, with the view to a possible reconciliation. It failed utterly, and James's notions on the subject were then delivered; they were very simple, and may be very briefly expressed—all must conform to the views of the Church, and to the bishops, who were its voice. As all would not conform, the next step was to drive the obstinate men from the Church. In all directions was then once more seen the spectacle of Puritan clergymen quitting their homes and their flocks. Who can estimate the suffering that must have been imposed by all these changes? As to the Catholics, the hand of persecution pressed on them more relentlessly than ever. Let us just select, from the millions of the population then living, three cases; that we may see, by actual examples, what was the sort of process to which the Reformed Church thought proper to subject the members of the unreformed one. In 1603, six seminary priests and Jesuits were executed in Lancashire, for the crime of staying in England, in opposition to the law that expatriated them. That is one fact. On their trial, one of the judges said, that *all* persons hearing mass from such priests were guilty of felony. That is a second fact. An aged Catholic gentleman, Mr. Pound, who was weak enough to believe no English King or Government was capable of countenancing such proceedings or language, petitioned James on the subject, and, generally, on the persecution of the Catholics. For that petition, the poor old gentleman was sentenced to indefinite confinement, to a fine of a thousand pounds, and to the pillory! Nay, he only narrowly escaped the further amenities of being nailed to the pillory, and having his ears cut off, by a majority of one or two, when a vote was taken. Pray let our readers think of these facts, and of all that they indicate as to the condition of the Catholics in England, whenever they wonder at the iniquities of the contemporary event—the Gunpowder Plot. Of all the actors in this terrible conspiracy, there was scarcely one that had not been goaded into action by his own sufferings, or by the sufferings of his friends and connections, independent of his general sympathy with his Catholic brethren throughout the country. Guido Fawkes, or Faux, and the others were criminals of no ordinary die, for they proposed to destroy the innocent with the

guilty: they could not—did not—hope to avoid that, in blowing-up an entire Parliament, with the Royal Family, by such an explosion; but theirs were no ordinary provocations, and while we look with detestation upon their acts, it is impossible to avoid admiring the heroic courage and spirit of self-sacrifice with which they carried on their operations, or to regret that James and his advisers could not also have met with something like true judicial punishment for their share in the horrid business. Tempting as the theme is, we cannot dwell on the particulars; beyond, at least, the moment of the actual collapse of the scheme. It will probably be never accurately known who wrote the famous letter to Mounteagle, from which it is supposed the Government first learned what was going on. Tresham seems to have been the likeliest person. And his great anxiety to abandon the attempt and fly, when some suspicious circumstances were made known to them, implying discovery, may have been secretly caused by his absolute knowledge, which he almost even confessed, that they were so discovered. But, with wonderful courage, Fawkes stayed at his post to the last. On the 4th of November, the Lord Chamberlain, accompanied by Lord Mounteagle, went—as though in due routine of duty before the opening of Parliament next day—through the House; and, after a time, descended to the vaults below. On opening the door of the powder-cellar, they saw standing in a corner “a very tall and desperate fellow,” who said, on being questioned, he was servant to Mr. Percy (one of the conspirators and a member of the great house of Percy), and that he looked after the coals. “Your master has laid in a good stock of fuel,” observed the Chamberlain, as he went away. Even then Fawkes would not attempt to fly; he still seems to have hoped. At two in the early morning of the 5th of November, Fawkes stepped forth, booted and spurred, and looked about him; it was his last look as a free man. Before he could move (and if time had been given him, he would, probably, have soon settled alike his own and his captors’ fate, by firing the powder) he was seized and bound; and he found himself in the presence of Sir Thomas Knevelt, a magistrate, and of a party of soldiers. He was immediately taken to the palace, and right into James’s own bedchamber, where he was questioned by the King, and some members of his council. Fawkes stood there much more like a sovereign than he who possessed the right and title. If there were fears and tremblings, and indefinable dread in men’s hearts just then, Fawkes had no share in such emotions. Towering darkly before them, per-

fectly calm and self-possessed, answering every glance of disgust or threatening with a look of scorn and defiance, he stood the very exemplar of a man who believed he had acted rightly, and cared nothing about the world's opinions, or, more terrible still, the world's punishments. He avowed his purpose, and regretted its failure. Who were his accomplices? He could not resolve to accuse any. How could he have the heart, asked James, to destroy the royal children, and so many innocent souls? "Dangerous diseases require desperate remedies," was the answer. Why had he collected so many barrels of gunpowder? inquired some foolish courtier, a Scotchman. "One of my objects was to blow Scotchmen back into Scotland." We need not follow the history of the plot or its chief actors. Fawkes, after prolonged torture, went to the scaffold, and there most of his brother plotters accompanied, or followed him, after an ineffectual attempt to raise all the Catholics of England in insurrection. Some were, happily for themselves, killed in this attempt; and among them was Catesby, the true head, as Fawkes seems to have been the strong hand, of the conspiracy.

Surely the Government had learned something at last! Oh, undoubtedly—they had not been severe enough: that was very clear. So fresh persecution was the order of the day. No Catholic recusant was now to appear at Court (that calamity might have been got over, we imagine), or to live in London, or within ten miles, or to remove more than five miles from home, without a license from four magistrates. Catholics were not to be surgeons, physicians, lawyers, or judges; not to be clerks or officers in any public court or corporation; they were to resign all right to be administrators, executors, or guardians. If persons were married by a Catholic priest, the Catholic husband could have no claim on the property of his wife; the Catholic wife on the property of her husband. If Catholics did not have their children baptized by a Protestant minister, a hundred pounds was to be paid for each omission. In case of death, Catholic relatives had to pay twenty pounds for burying in any other than the Protestant churchyard. Every Catholic servant was to cost ten pounds a month; and probably, it was thought, if the rich Catholic families took any who were not Catholics for servants, there would be plenty of opportunity for spies, and treachery, and convictions, and fines. Even a Catholic guest was to cost his entertainer ten pounds. In brief, James and his Parliament excommunicated the whole of the English Catholics at one blow.

Their very houses might be broken open and searched; their books and furniture destroyed, on the mere allegation that they bore relation to idolatrous worship; their horses and arms might be swept off by an order from a single magistrate.

Can our readers conceive of anything in store—still worse? Yet these were only the pains and penalties for such Catholics as were willing to take an oath by which they renounced allegiance to the Pope in temporal matters. If they would go so far, then they were to be welcomed with all these indulgences. But if they would not do this, for so kindly and tolerant a government—if they had grown fanatical in their obstinacy, under what they would persist in looking on as a ferocious and infamous policy, they were to be imprisoned for life, forfeit all their personal property, and the rents of their lands.

History ought to be true; and these are facts which seem to be as well proved as any that history can have to deal with, yet one can scarcely resist a kind of incredulity on hearing of them, so senseless as well as so barbarous do they now appear. One half expects to discover that they are mere childish tricks—a kind of political play, which will presently be ended, and the actors appear in their true and more comprehensible character. But, alas! there was no delusion about the hanging, drawing, and quartering of Jesuit priests; or about the multitudes of Catholic prisoners who thronged the jails; or about the spirit in which the penal laws must have been administered for many years, as evidenced by a single example: A Catholic gentleman (Mr. Floyd) happened, in the year 1621, to express an opinion on foreign affairs distasteful to Protestants at home, and particularly unpleasant to James, as it related to the affairs of Bohemia, where his daughter was queen. So Mr. Floyd was fined £5000, pilloried, degraded from the rank of a gentleman, and ordered to be held as infamous; and, in visible token thereof, sent to Newgate for life.

It evidently needed but a slight degree of temptation more to induce the Government to revive the fires of Smithfield against the Catholics. Probably fear alone prevented, for men had been again sent to heaven by the old martyr's path, during this reign. Legate, an Unitarian, was burned in Smithfield, in 1612, and Wightman (who is supposed to have been insane), also for heresy, shortly after. And there, at last, was reached the end of such exhibitions. The people had grown sick of them—lawyers began to question their legality—bishops doubted whether they were advancing the interests of the Church; "So," says

Fuller, "James accordingly preferred that heretics should hereafter silently and privately waste themselves in prison." Let our readers try to understand, if they can, all the horrors wrapped up in that brief sentence.

But there was to be a great relaxation before long, at the instance of the same monarch. Who could, beforehand, divine the cause? Secret doubts of the humanity or right of such legislation? growing fear of the danger of new gunpowder plots? more intelligent views of State policy? Nothing of the kind. The cause was, James took it into his head to marry his son to the daughter of a Catholic king, and, of all kings, to a king of Spain—the very *beau idéal* of a faithful Catholic country. Behold, by the revelation of this one fact, the worth of all the religious professions, on which alone James's government could base their cruel and infamous legislation! They disappeared in an instant, when dynastic and family considerations supervened. The jails were now opened, and the liberated Catholics were counted by "thousands," although probably many remained behind who could not give the security required for their reappearance when called on. All Catholic recusants were pardoned who applied to the King. Millennium surely was come at last; Catholic lion and Protestant lamb should lie down together, and no more be afraid. James actually wrote to the Pope. Prince Charles went to Spain to see his proposed bride. Still advancing in the new path, even seminary priests and Jesuits—men always the first to suffer, the last to be relieved—were discharged from the London prisons. Yes, the reign of religious brotherhood must be coming. But all at once the Spanish match goes off, and with it the illusion of Catholic hope; all things relapse into the old course. Fresh orders for persecution were issued. To please the Parliament and the Established Church, James even solemnly, on one occasion, called God to witness his determination never to permit any indulgence or toleration. And then, to end this frightful travestie of government, when Charles did marry a Catholic after all—Henrietta Maria of France—James once more promised liberty of conscience to the Catholics. And so, see-sawing between the desire to please Catholic allied sovereigns, and to temporize with anti-Catholic persons at home, James went on; until he died in 1625, and left to his heir such a legacy as never before, in all recorded history, had passed at a royal death—the legacy, we mean, of a kingly power in civil and religious matters, apparently almost unbounded in



idea, but accompanied with certain elements of opposition in the public mind that not only threatened to seriously compromise that idea in all its practical developments, but which proved to be so deep and strong as gradually to lead to the Civil War, and the exhibition of a monarch on trial before his own subjects, and his going thence to the scaffold, guarded by his own soldiers, and dying the death of a



ARCHBISHOP LAUD.

“traitor ;”—he, a crowned and anointed king, who had imbibed with his earliest breath the belief that treason was, in essence, simply opposition to the royal will.

To make this legacy still more dangerous, there were peculiarly able men ready on both sides to carry the policy they enforced onward to the most rigorously logical conclusions. What, perhaps, Charles esteemed one of the most fortunate of circumstances, his being blessed with an adviser and coadjutor like Laud, who shared his own

faith in the beauty of despotism, in the wickedness of subjects thinking of self-government, and in the advisability of carrying out, no matter to what lengths, any practicable measures of repression ;—these were, doubtless, precious qualities in Charles's eyes, yet they probably cost him his own life and throne. Perhaps no man ever breathed who was more likely than Laud to exasperate and rouse to their lowest depths, in opposition to him, all the religious instincts of the fast-growing Puritan body. There was an unctuous piety and an odour of gentleness about him, while striving to extirpate everything that bore the least impress of religious freedom, and to bring England back to a second Papacy—where he (Laud) should rule spiritually supreme—that must have been inexpressibly revolting to every man who could look in the least below the surface, and study the internal conditions of such a character. Look at his face. Nothing can be less like Bishop Gardiner's, which we characterized as so full of craft and cruelty. Here the expression is of a man so spiritually elevated, in his own estimation, that he cannot even condescend to look down upon the thoughts, or wishes, or sufferings of the rest of humanity. He will tell them what to do, and they may be sure he is right when he does speak. He will even, with holy sorrow, set in motion—like a potentate of our own time—the bloodiest engines of State, in order that subjects shall be coerced to their own good. But who can doubt his holiness ? What infatuation to oppose him ! But if men will do that, alas ! they must then take the consequences. Let us follow this saintly hero, whose example yet draws, by irresistible attraction, the eyes and hearts of living men, and fires ministers of the English Church—men who are not ashamed to prostitute their pulpits by teaching the youthful English mind to look back upon him with veneration ;—yes, let us follow this Christian prelate into his sanctum of government—the Star Chamber—and listen, with charmed senses, to the golden lessons of love, and life, and liberty, that thence flow forth.

Alexander Leighton, a Scotchman, and a preacher among the Puritans, is called before Laud, to answer for a book he has written against the Catholic Queen, and the (suspected half-Catholic) bishops. It is a bad book, full of fiery zeal, and intolerance, and disrespect ; but Laud must teach him better, and his mode is, as the public soon see, degradation from the ministry—which, may be, so far was quite right—and a public whipping in Palace Yard, the pillory for two

hours, the cutting off one ear, slitting one nostril, and the branding one cheek with the letters "S. S.," so that all men might read on his face as they ran, "Sower of Sedition." Mark the playfulness and kindness of touch in the "*one*," when there were two parts that almost invited punishment! So much for the good prelate's beginnings of instruction: too tolerant, perhaps—but that will be remedied. A week after these inflictions, Leighton again appears in public, and now the "*one*" is explained; it was to give opportunity for the fuller enjoyment of the two. With the old wounds yet unhealed, Leighton stands there, under an English sky, to receive from English hands, in the presence of English crowds, a repetition of all the former punish-



OLD STAR CHAMBER BEFORE THE FIRE.

ments. Again the whipping, and the pillory, the cutting off the other ear, slitting the other nostril, branding the other cheek, and then, peace—such peace as the bodily and mental anguish would permit—and the apparently life-long imprisonment that follows. That event belongs to the year 1630. Let us again visit the Star Chamber in 1634.

Prynne is now the offender. He has attacked the players in his book, the "*Histrio-Matrix*." "And although he knew well that his Majesty's royal Queen, the Lords of the Council, etc., were in their public festivals oftentimes present, spectators of some masques and dances, and many recreations that were tolerable, and in themselves sinless, and so declared to be by a book printed in the time of his Majesty's royal father; yet Mr. Prynne, in his book, had railed not only against stage plays, comedies, dancings, and all other exercises of the people, and against all such as frequent or behold them, but further, in particular, against hunting, public festivals, Christmas-keeping, bonfires, and May-poles; nay, even against the dressing up of houses with green ivy."

Prynne had added to these offences by printing Leighton's book. What can the holy and suffering Archbishop do—this poor martyred Laud, who has to live while such things are done—but fine Prynne ten thousand pounds, brand him, cut off his ears, and slit his nose? Yes, we forget; he could, and did do something more. He obtained the power of licensing all printed books. When the printers, in consequence, proposed new works in divinity, which did not hit the taste or views of Laud, he refused permission. The printers humbly acquiesced, and contented themselves with resolving to print old books of divinity, that had been licensed by previous archbishops. There they must be right. "Oh, dear, no!" practically suggested Laud; they must have his permission for everything, and he did not approve of some, even, that his predecessors had sanctioned. So here was a man claiming and exercising the power to regulate the entire amount, and quality, and character of all the materials for religious thought that England was to have, under a Reformed Church! Was not this, as we have said, a second Papacy? The printers, as men of business, of course declined any sort of martyrdom. They acquiesced in Laud's measures. But the printing press was made for man, not for printers; and when its own ministering priests refused, under such circumstances, to put it to its legitimate use, of expressing the thoughts and feelings of the time, earnest men took it into their own hands; and so issued their books, in spite of printer or Laud. Of course Laud did not choose to be beaten that way; had he not his own tried and faithful instruments, the pillory and the lash? So these were to be bestowed on all non-printers who dared to set up a press, or to compose the type, or to work off the sheets of any publication! We will only

add to these passages of Laud's history, the illustrative comment, that among the prohibited books of his legislation were Bishop Jewel's, including the well-known "Practice of Piety," and Fox's famous book on the martyrs!

The third and last of these Star Chamber persecutions by Laud that we have space or patience to mention, took place in 1637, when Prynne was again brought up, but this time in company with Bastwick, a physician, and Burton, a bachelor in divinity. Their offence was writing against the hierarchy of the Church, so that even the holy one—Laud himself, and his good intentions, was attacked. Comparing the sentence with that upon Leighton, or with that upon Prynne previously, one can see with what ineffable sweetness the Archbishop had rather moderated than increased the needful severities of law, precisely because, perhaps, he was himself beginning to be personally concerned. So they were fined only five thousand pounds each (quite enough, of course, to make payment impossible); Bastwick and Burton were put in the pillory, where it much troubled the good primate that they should be "suffered to talk what they pleased, and win acclamations from the people, and have notes taken of what they spake." They had only their ears cut off; while Prynne, having previously lost his ears, was now again hacked in the most horrible fashion by the hangman, to try to hew off more of the quivering flesh; and branded on both cheeks with "S. L.," for "Seditious Libeller." Why not, also, "Saint Laud?"

Do not our readers yearn to know something of the effects of such spectacles upon the people of England? Did they sympathize with such punishments for such crimes? Thank God! one can answer all such questions as an Englishman would wish to be able to answer them. The people, we are told, "cried and howled terribly, especially when Burton was cropt."

As he went to his place of imprisonment, a hundred thousand persons gathered to see him pass by; and money to a large amount was thrown into the coach where his wife was, following behind. As Prynne went through Chester, on his way to Carnarvon Castle, he was met by the sheriff and other gentlemen, who provided his dinner, defrayed his expenses, and furnished him with means to make his dungeon at the castle less bare and uncomfortable. Prynne was too independent-minded to take the presents which were offered to him. When the pious Laud heard of these things, he ordered up the sheriff to

London ; and he caused the captives to be sent to fresh prisons, out of the way of their sympathizers, in the Channel Islands—where not even the wives of Burton and Bastwick were permitted to see them. These facts might have been answer sufficient to Laud, and to his royal master, Charles ; they were not, however ; but the decisive answer did come in the meeting of that ever-memorable Long Parliament, which



WILLIAM PRYNNE.

soon made inquisition of innocent blood, which brought Prynne, and Burton, and Bastwick, in honour and triumph, back to London, and sent the Primate to the Tower, and, eventually, to the scaffold. That was what England thought of the Star Chamber and its execrable doings, and of the man who guided all its deliberations,—the man



whom certain religionists of our own time would hold up to us as the model for a Christian priest and ruler. They may depend upon it, that new Lauds would find new parliaments of the people quite able and prepared to deal with them. And we may here observe, that those good, easy men, who are not disposed to look under the surface of the time, or take note of any events that do not shout out their nature



HENRY BURTON.

and presence into the great ear of the world, by some unmistakable cry, may, perhaps, often wonder why it is that the apparently insignificant question of vestments, and bowings, and genuflexions, should create so much heart-burning in so many of the parishes of England. It is because these practices were peculiarly Laud's practices, and

formed a part of his scheme of religion—which, doubtless, he would have explained even more fully than he did, had he not been so summarily cut short by the Long Parliament.

What a contrast was presented after Charles's own blood had sealed the fate of his system, and the Commonwealth men rose to power under Cromwell! There began, then, for the first time in English history, a grand period of practical toleration in matters of religion. Cromwell spoke plainly to the Parliament at the very outset, when he called them together in the Painted Chamber at Westminster, and showed them that while he was no more inclined than they must have been, to allow the wild fantastic theories of religious government that were growing up like rank weeds, on all sides, to destroy liberty, property, law, and national religion, he could also see the other aspect of the question, and respect the sacred principle of liberty of conscience. The holders of such opinions "can tell the magistrates that he hath nothing to do with men in these matters, for these are matters of conscience and opinion; they are matters of religion—what hath the magistrate to do with them? *He is to look to the outward man, but not to meddle with the inward man.*" It is quite true Cromwell, in speaking thus, was only apparently going on to urge the necessity of guarding against the sectaries and enthusiasts—the Fifth-Monarchy Men, for instance, who held that the Millennium was at hand, Christ coming, and that they, the saints, were to have, under Him, the government of the world: so, in their estimation, the Apocalypse assured them. But that was only a part of the wonderful tact and subtilty of the great Protector: whose very mystification of speech appears, when carefully studied, to arise from one of two causes—either a great power of seeing into the many aspects of the difficult questions presented to him for solution, and which he could not at once, and satisfactorily, decide by his own conscience and intellect, and which therefore made him, instinctively, take time to his aid; or, the vivid sense of the manifold inconsistencies of the men and sects around him, and of the evil consequences to which they led if unrestricted by force, or by the far less objectionable agency of his own personal influence in persuasion. The anecdote that has been preserved (in Spence's well-known collection), relative to his treatment of the Jews, who had been expelled for centuries from England, shows these qualities and their modes of development so happily, that we will transcribe the passage. The Jews, it appears, wished for a synagogue in London, so they went



to Cromwell, then Protector, and offered him sixty thousand pounds for that privilege. Cromwell appointed them a day for his giving them an answer. He then sent for some of the most powerful among the clergy, and some of the chief merchants in the City, to be present at the meeting. It was in the long gallery at Whitehall. Sir Paul Rycaut, who was then a young man, pressed in among the crowd, and said he never heard a man speak so well in his life as Cromwell did on this occasion. When they were all met, he ordered the Jews to speak for themselves. After that he turned to the clergy, who inveighed against the Jews, as a cruel and cursed people. Cromwell, in his answer to the clergy, called them "Men of God;" and desired to be informed by them, whether it was not their opinion that the Jews were one day to be called into the Church? He then desired to know whether it was not every Christian man's duty to forward that good end all he could? Then he flourished a good deal on the religion prevailing in this nation, the only place in the world where religion was taught in its full purity: was it not our duty, in particular, to encourage them to settle here, where alone they could be taught the truth; and not exclude them from the sight, and leave them among idolaters? This silenced. He then turned to the merchants; who spake much of their falseness and meanness, and that they would get their trade from them. "'Tis true," says Cromwell, "they are the meanest and most despised of all people." He then fell into abusing the Jews most heartily; and after he had said everything that was contemptible and low of them—"Can you really be afraid," said he, "that this mean, despised people should be able to prevail in trade and credit over the merchants in England, the noblest and most esteemed merchants in the whole world." Thus he went on till he had silenced them too; and so was at liberty to grant what he desired to the Jews.

The domestic scenes of history often rival in effect, if they do not even surpass, those of the theatre (partly, no doubt, because of the underlying fact of their actual truth), and this seems to us to be one of them.

And Cromwell showed his mind still more clearly when the Parliament began to tamper with the very foundations of his power. He then averred, that one of the essentials of his position was, "that in matters of religion there should be a due liberty of conscience, with bounds and liberties set, so as to prevent persecution:" simple, but golden words. But the Protector had to deal with men who would

not listen, charm he never so wisely. So when the Parliament granted him a veto on bills touching liberty of conscience, they expressly excluded such power over bills passed for the suppression of heresies. This was something like what a permission to play the tragedy of Hamlet would be to a manager, on the condition that he excluded the principal part. The wide divergence between Cromwell and the men of his time is shown, perhaps, even more strikingly in another—because individual—case, and one, therefore, less liable to be determined upon extrinsic considerations. While we find the Parliament, in 1655, ordering the books of Biddle, the father of Unitarianism, to be burned, we find the Protector, a little later, pensioning the same man. No wonder that when the hand of death conquered him, whom nothing else could, matters soon relapsed into the old train of strife and bigotry.

At first, Charles II. appeared to have learned something in the Protector's school. In his declaration from Breda, he pledged himself to the principle of toleration, when he used or signed these words:—"And because the passion and uncharitableness of the times have produced several opinions in religion by which men are engaged in parties and animosities against each other, which, when they shall hereafter unite in a freedom of conversation, will be composed, or better understood, we do declare a liberty to tender consciences; and that no man shall be called in question for difference of opinion in matters of religion, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom; and that we shall be ready to consent to such an Act of Parliament, as, upon mature deliberation, shall be offered unto us, for the full granting that indulgence." And this manifesto was followed up by the "Healing Declaration," happily so called, which suggested a kind of compromise between the High Church party, and the Presbyterians, who, kept in check while Cromwell ruled, by him and his adherents the Independents, were now in a position of great strength. But that Church party wanted the old pre-eminence;—which the Presbyterians, who had considered themselves as the true Church, during the Commonwealth, might possibly have granted; but then, there were the Independents, who would, necessarily, gain a share of the advantages flowing from the proposed measure, which, undoubtedly, would have proved one of immense help to the cause of religious liberty. So the proposed legislation was thrown out by the Parliament. Two years later, the Presbyterians received their logical punishment—by the en-

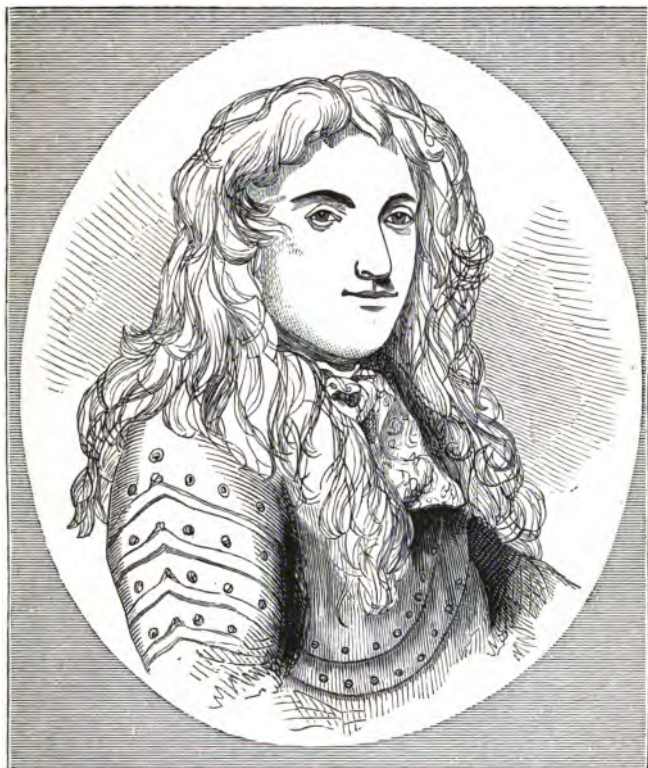
forcement of the Act of Uniformity, which caused no less than two thousand clergymen to be excluded from their livings; and these were chiefly Presbyterians.

And even then they would learn nothing from, repent nothing of, their former errors and failures. When the Earl of Digby planned a law of toleration that should let in together Catholics and Nonconformists, under cover of a law for the benefit of the latter, the Presbyterians actually preferred persecution to sharing relief from it with the Catholics. But it must not be forgotten, in justice to them, that the suspicions of a leaning to the old faith that had so constantly accompanied the rule of each sovereign since the time of Henry VIII. (unless that sovereign's entire policy and character prevented, as was the case with Edward VI. and Elizabeth) became now more rife than ever: we shall see with what justice as applied to Charles II. So when this king continued to issue declarations of indulgence, from time to time, notwithstanding the practical measures of administration that intervened, Parliament not only refused to go with him, but actually forced legislation into the exactly opposite path. The famous, or rather infamous, Conventicle Bill was now passed. It was Scotland that originated the ideas expressed by the word "conventicle," and a royal proclamation, issued by James I., in 1624, explains the matter very clearly:—"We have of late known, to our unspeakable grief, that a number of our subjects, some of them misled by the turbulent persuasions of restless ministers, either deprived of their functions or confined for just causes, or such as leave the conduct of their own flock to debauch and seduce their neighbour's—many affecting hypocritically the glory of purity and zeal above others, and some corrupted by the bad example of the former—have casten off the reverent respect and obedience that they owe to our authority royal and to their pastors, contemned and infringed their doctrine, disobeyed and controlled their ordinary discipline, abstained to hear the Word preached, and to participate of the sacrament ministered by them in their own parish, and have disorderly strayed to other congregations, and in the end numbers of them have assembled themselves in private houses in Edinburgh, and other places, to hear from intruding ministers, preachings, exhortations, prayers, and all sorts of exercises fitting their unruly fantasies, many times at the very ordinary hours when their own pastors were, according to their lawful calling, preaching in their parish kirks." To worship God, therefore, when and where one's own inclinations suggested, was, in the govern-

mental and established opinion of James's time, a heavy offence. And now, in the time of the second Charles, after all the experience of the religious liberty granted by the Commonwealth,"an English Parliament was ready to deal with it as a matter deserving condign punishment. So Nonconformists were at once peremptorily forbidden to frequent conventicles, or places of worship not belonging to the Established Church, and exposed to a graduated scale of imprisonment for those who disobeyed, ranging from three months' simple imprisonment up to seven years' transportation! And this was no law to be merely held over the heads of the people, it was enforced, and with the most terrible sufferings to all the unhappy Christians who persisted in the crime of worshipping God in their own way.

The Scottish Parliament followed the guidance of the English, and then Archbishop Sharp set to work. The great persecution of the Covenanters, which history, works of fiction, and national and local traditions have invested with a terrible charm, began. There was a kind of poetical fitness between the facts of the origin and of the persecution of the Covenanters. As it was Laud whose hot-bed theories of religious rule and discipline had first plunged Scotland into the grave contest between Prelacy and Presbyterianism, and so brought on the Covenant, in 1638—that solemn instrument by which the people of Scotland undertook to maintain, at all hazards, their old faith—so was it now another Laud who undertook, in a kindred spirit, a similar work, in rooting out the Conventicles, and punishing those who resorted to them. The end was no less significant in both cases. While Laud died legally on the scaffold, Sharp perished at the hands of the Covenanters, who were armed with no authority to kill him but such as their own maddened natures gave. Let us not forget the sort of treatment the Covenanters had received from this holy minister of God. After their defeat in arms on the Pentland Hills, in 1666, when forty were killed, and one hundred and thirty taken prisoners, Sharp caused ten to be hanged at Edinburgh, and *thirty-five hanged before their own doors*, in their own localities. The modes of discovering such criminals were quite worthy of the modes of punishing them when discovered. Not only was torture used, but the amiable Archbishop and his worthy ministerial coadjutor, Lauderdale, actually had an altogether new species of torture brought into use, being, we suppose, dissatisfied with all previous sources of available pain. The *boot* was now used. This was an instrument for crushing the leg, by

a wedge driven between the bone and a case of iron that enclosed the limb. Think of the physical anguish we all feel from the slightest injury to the shin, and we can then, perhaps, though it is difficult, get some revelation into the state of the mind and heart of the wretch who first invented this torture! Yet what was he who laboured without responsibility, in comparison to the man who took his infernal invention, and applied it to the extinction of religious liberty? Miserable



GRAHAM OF CLAVERTHOUSE—VISCOUNT DUNDEE.

men! They might as well have applied it to the extinction of the Creator himself.

It was at this time that another man rose into an equally infamous notoriety—Graham of Claverhouse. Who could suppose, as they look upon his youthful, elegant features, that they represent a man who did not scruple to pour out the blood of his fellow-men like water—

to hunt them like vermin—to scatter their brains, in cold blood, by the fire of his soldiery, before their very homes, and in the faces of their wives and children, provided only they happened to be called Covenanters, and had taken a fancy to worship God among the silent hills, because there alone could they do so freely?

Meanwhile, the King and Parliament became gradually more and more hostile, for his Catholic tendencies became more and more obvious. So when he issued yet another declaration of indulgence, suspending the penal laws against Catholics and Nonconformists in both countries, the Parliament responded by a counter declaration, that the penal laws in ecclesiastical matters could not be so suspended without a Parliamentary Act. The King was not only beaten, but a new measure of penal legislation against liberty of conscience marked the event; the Test Act was passed in 1673, and remained, down to our era, a constant subject of strife and injustice. By that Act, all men who refused to take the usual oath, receive the sacrament according to the Church of England manner, and renounce the doctrine of transubstantiation, were rendered incapable of any public employment. Yet, disgraceful as the Act was, and showing retrogression in ideas of religious liberty, the student of Progress will see in it, when he looks over the whole history of his country, an equally significant proof of the good that had been silently achieved by the martyrs of conscience, in their continual struggles: instead of merely keeping such men out of office, the demand, a century or two before, would have been, put them into the fire!

And, as if to press home this very truth, we find that it was in this period (the actual year was 1677) that Parliament abolished the old writ *de hæretico comburendo*, the instrument of so many burnings; and did it, even while yearning to hang up recusant Catholics. The mighty march *would* go on in spite of kings, or parliaments, or bigots of any or every creed.

The dread of the secret tendencies of Charles II. was only too well founded. He was not earnest enough, not bigoted enough, to attempt much that was difficult, even to compass his own wishes; and so the greater part of his reign was, as we have seen, signalized by proceedings against Catholics and Dissenters, utterly foreign to his open declarations, and his honest convictions. But when the hour of death drew on, he yielded to these convictions, and received, secretly, in the palace, a man who was able to administer to him the Catholic rites.

This was done by the help of his brother, the Duke of York, a known Catholic.

The later years of Charles's reign had been disturbed by the plots that were set on foot to avert the threatened danger to the Protestant cause, by the succession to the throne of that brother. One of the plots, known as the Rye House, led to the execution of Lord William Russell and of Algernon Sidney—two of the illustrious names of our history. These events augured ill for the actual reign when it did come. James's first important religious movement, the freeing Catholics and Dissenters from the jails, and announcing general toleration, might have been accepted, if not exactly welcomed, from a different monarch; but, from one who was known to be at once a Catholic and a bigot, the gift was looked upon with horror by all but the Catholics. The very Dissenters who were to be relieved actually took up an attitude of support to their enemies of the Established Church, when they saw impending another conflict between—not rival sects in the Reformed religion, but between all these and the old Catholic faith. Insurrection—still dogging the steps of religious bigotry—again broke out, and were again put down. The Duke of Monmouth in England, and Argyle in Scotland, both died on the scaffold. Papists were admitted to offices of state, Protestant soldiers were cashiered, the Pope's nuncio was received, all were getting ready for the grand measure, which, however, was still preceded by the hypocritical declaration of liberty of conscience, and the practical suspension of all penal laws against the Catholics, when everything was brought to a grand crisis, by the seven bishops of the Established Church, who refused to read the Declaration in the churches, as the clergy were required by the King to do, who were arrested, sent to the Tower, tried and acquitted, and a great outburst of national feeling, that ended at last in James's self-imposed banishment—permanent exclusion of him, and his heirs for ever, from the throne, and the invitation to the Protestant Prince of Orange to become William III. of England.

Though we have hitherto left unmentioned, we cannot pass over unnoticed, that stain upon Christian history—that hideous mockery of religious liberty—the persecution of the so-called witches.

For many years after the Reformation, the minds of the lower classes, and in many instances those of the higher classes also, no longer fed by stories of present, or by memories of past miracles, Madonnas, and saints, drew largely upon anything else that offered

in the shape of the marvellous, and so, probably, swelled the already existing streams of superstitious belief in, an horror of, witchery and devilcraft. During the reign of Elizabeth, in the year 1562, we are especially told that there were an immense number of monstrous births. Now, such a fact would produce two results: increase the general belief in something abnormal going on, and swell the number of the insane, or silly, or visionary, or crafty people, who, by their own belief and practices, helped to keep up the delusion in the minds of others, that there were other than earthly communications. Thousands of them appear to have professed a knowledge of the art, and become so great a nuisance to the country that a law was passed against enchantments, conjurations, witchcraft, and charming; the last-mentioned being, we are told, "a degree of witchcraft, and too ordinary in the land." And this statute, instead of in any way lessening, seems to have increased the evil to a frightful degree. Prophets raved throughout the country, exciting and maddening the minds of the people, while all professed witches were held more in awe than ever. In Scotland, in 1643, the Presbyterians, who were then busily engaged in suppressing witchcraft, being much troubled at its continual increase, under various forms and aspects, summoned an assembly to take up the consideration of the subject "upon the report of the extraordinary multiplying of witches."

We learn, from an Act passed in that year, not only the causes of the prevalence of witchcraft and charmers, but the measures to be taken to check them. The causes are "found to be these especially—extremity of grief, malice, passion, and desire of revenge, pinching poverty, solicitations of other witches and charmers, for in such cases the devil assails them, offers aid, and much prevails." The measures it was deemed expedient to take against the evil practices were, to give power to "understanding gentlemen and magistrates," in such places as should be troubled with them, to "apprehend, try, and execute justice against all persons guilty of witchcraft within the said bounds." Reasons for their apprehension were not wanting. It was suggested that "a reigning bruit of witchcraft, backed with delations of confessing witches, being confronted with them—for it is found that the delations of two or three confessing witches hath ordinarily proved true"—should be esteemed sufficient.

Ministers of the Church were to apply their active censure against profane persons of all descriptions, to use their utmost endeavours to



discover and search out these dark arts, and lastly, it appears (though one is almost surprised to find it, among so much superstition, bigotry, and ignorance), they were to attend more strictly to the careful religious training of their flocks. In another part of the document, a caution is given respecting the care of the unhappy wretches who fell victims to the voracious appetite of the times, when in custody—and which suggests but too painfully the sufferings to which they must have been exposed—else they will be apt to make away with their miserable lives if they be not strictly watched and guarded. A year or two later, and Parliament appointed a council, formed of ministers, lawyers, and physicians, to consider the matter, and to decide on the most efficacious mode of banishing for ever the accursed art from the holy precincts of the Church. Ample evidence of the connection of the supposed witches and prophets with the devil was provided for the occasion.

“I myself,” says Sir John Balfour, who has handed down to us some horrible facts in connection with witchcraft and witches, “did see, on the 20th of July, this year, in one afternoon, commissions, severally directed by the Parliament, for trying and burning of twenty-seven witches, women—and three men and boys; their depositions were publicly read in face of Parliament, before the house would vote to the president’s subscribing of the act for the clerk issuing of their commissions. Likewise divers commissions were given by the Lords of the Council, in November and December, this same year, for trying and burning of witches: their depositions were read. Amongst the which there was one that confessed she had been of late at a meeting with the devil, at which there were above five hundred witches present. So far had that wicked enemy of mankind prevailed, by his illusions and practices over these poor miserable souls.”

Sir John also proceeds, in his noble indignation of the vile art, to relate how the Lady of Pittardo, in Fifeshire, was seized and imprisoned in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, on a charge of witchcraft; when, while awaiting her trial, she was one morning found dead, with all the symptoms of having swallowed poison of a violent nature—a sure sign, in Sir John’s opinion, of guilt. “It was thought,” says he, “that she had either taken the poison of herself, being guilty of that hellish crime, or that it had been administered to her by the advice of her friends and kindred, whom, by her wickedness, if she had been publicly burned, she had blotted and stained those families she was descended of,

and of whom were descended many religious, worshipful, and worthy personages."

The insanity of these trials could not be more horribly, yet truly portrayed, than by Sir John's own evidence of the preposterous confessions wrenched from the unfortunate victims by the torture or the stake.

These confessions, enlarged upon and exaggerated by the Church, as of course they would be, to show the blackness of the sin, fell like oil upon the rising fire of belief throughout the country, and left the *power* of the witch at last undoubted. But in most cases, those who perished prophesied from the stake, and called down vengeance upon the heads of their persecutors. Frequently they appealed, in their frantic agony, to the people themselves, to avenge their murder; thus waking in their hearts hatred and indignation of the new laws, rebellion and mutiny against the Church; while thus raising, in other imaginations—always pining for excitement—the same madness that raged in their own. By deaths like these, occurring one after another in rapid succession, the pretended suppressors of witchcraft dragged down the minds of the people to the same narrowness as their own. Thirty alleged witches were burnt in Fife, within a few months.

Can the reader realize this, in connection with a time from which dates no inconsiderable part of all our civil and religious liberty—the time of the Long Parliament and Puritanism—and the Civil War?

Barrington unhesitatingly sets down the number of persons who perished as witches in England at thirty thousand; while in Europe, Beccaria estimates that they exceeded a hundred thousand. This at the hands of Christian lawgivers and Christian administrators.

## CHAPTER IV.

SINCE THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.

WITH a Protestant prince on the throne, brought from a foreign country precisely because of his Protestantism (taken of course in connection with the fact of his being the husband of Mary, the daughter of the runaway king), all the long-cherished and perfectly justifiable suspicions of royal treachery to the cause of the reformed religion began to die out; and one might have anticipated that then, at least, the bitterness and the strife of differing bodies of religionists might have been also gradually allayed. It was not the fault of the new king that such results were not obtained. When the Scottish commissioners came to London to offer to William the crown of Scotland, and receive, of course, his acceptance, they read aloud to him the coronation oath of their country, and he repeated each clause, holding up his right hand. Presently they came to one which bound the king to *root out all heretics and enemies to the true worship of God*, and which of course meant, root out everything that was not, as the delegates and those who sent them were, Presbyterian. The fact is worth dwelling on a moment, as one of those inconsistencies of human motive and action which are happily becoming difficult for us to understand, and which will be scarcely credible to our posterity. After all that the Covenanters had suffered as the exact logical and legitimate conclusion of the belief of their oppressors, that they had a right to destroy every form of religion that did not belong to Episcopacy, here were these very same Covenanters, in the very first moment of relief, asserting the same belief, and claiming the same power to inflict any conceivable amount of pain or injury upon others. So that, up to this moment, the contest was not still for religious liberty on either side. The weakest were always demanding toleration simply because they were weak; the strongest always demanding persecution because they were strong; and, however they might change places with each other in the varying fortunes of the struggle, the true motive with the

greater number of persons was still the same—the open or secret desire to force their faith upon their fellow-men.

When these Presbyterian commissioners had the perversity and the hardihood to make this demand upon the new king, their brethren, in countless numbers, could have but just quitted the prisons where Charles and James had immured them, to return to homes that had, doubtless, in many cases, disappeared altogether, broken up and de-



BASS ROCK, SCOTLAND.

stroyed by the hand of the law, or by despair and death, or by simple poverty and destitution. Nay, there must have been many of their compatriots still pining away in dungeons in those strong places which continued for a time to uphold their allegiance to James. Such was the famous fortress on the Bass Rock, Scotland, which remained many months in the possession of James's adherents, and was the last strong-

hold, we believe, in Britain, that he could claim the possession of. But these commissioners expressed, no doubt truly enough, the feeling of the stern, Calvinistic, uncompromising religionists whom they represented. The very martyrs—as they esteemed themselves—who had been wearing away their lives in apparently hopeless captivity, and crying aloud, “O Lord, how long?” would have said, if they had been compelled to finish in perfect truthfulness the half-uttered aspirations of their hearts, “O Lord, how long before we shall be free to injure others!” To ask, however, was not simply to have, from a man like William. He stopped, and said at once, he would not oblige himself to be a persecutor. *Persecutor!* Yes. That was the true word, and he did not mince his meaning by seeking a gentler phrase. The commissioners assured him the clause was not so meant. “Then,” said the King, “I take the oath in that sense only.” So that, in fact, the oath itself was to both sides a mere farce, so far as that clause was concerned. Better thus, however, than be the tragedy that many of William’s Scottish and English subjects would have driven him to perpetrate, if he had not taken up his position firmly at the first.

But what was it that had now triumphed? Not, apparently, religious liberty; scarcely, even in principle, Protestantism. Doubtless it was something springing from, belonging to, illustrating, promoting each, yet far less than either; it was, in a word, the triumph of the predominating sect as an all-powerful state religion. In England, that predominance was enjoyed by the existing establishment of the Church of England; but in Scotland, where the Church was in a small minority, it was destroyed by the same great event, and Presbyterianism raised into its place. Had these arrangements been the result of any definite aspirations or schemes for religious, as conjoined with national, liberty, doubtless Ireland would have had the benefit of the same precedent; or had she known, like Scotland, how to take care of her own interests, that fact would have secured for her the same results. But she was weak and helpless; and the glorious protecting guardian spirit of religious liberty was yet but a thing of the future; although its presence was beginning to be recognized by solitary spirits here and there, now as an instinct, now as a principle, and ever growing, as it was gazed upon, into statelier proportions and more wondrous beauty.

The new King dreamed at first, as Cromwell had dreamed before him, of a reign of religious harmony; and set seriously to work to

amalgamate church, kirk, and conventicle into an ideal union. He obtained from the Parliament the Toleration Act in 1689, by which all the penal laws were suspended in favour of Dissenters; a measure that still left the Test and Corporation Acts in existence, debarring all such men from public employment. And although the Catholics were denied, legislatively, the benefits of a participation in this relief, they did practically share in it to a considerable extent.

There was not very much in this, except as an indication of the probable future policy of the Government; and in that respect it proved to be a sad delusion. It was not long before the persecution of the Catholics began again, and more violently than ever; in order (to use the words of the Act of 1699) to prevent "the growth of Popery." Assertion of the opposing religious truth; calm but earnest discussion; energetic action by the printing-press; dissemination, in every possible way, of the knowledge of the tenets and influence of the reformed religion;—these were, we might suppose, to Protestants, the obvious and only forcible methods, permitted by the nature of things, for "the prevention of Popery," or any other widely-disseminated heresy. It was precisely those methods that had first been potent enough to persuade their forefathers to depart from the ancient faith; and that had—they knew—been the instruments, in God's hand, for the promotion of the word and the thing—they now took in vain—Protestantism. Let us note what they did do. Well, they offered a reward of a hundred pounds, as a kind of blood-money, for the apprehension of Popish priests, and others, who said mass, or performed any other priestly office; and who, when so caught, were to be imprisoned for life. To keep a school for, or to undertake the education of, Popish children, was to be liable to a fine of a hundred pounds. And if, to evade this, parents sent their children abroad to be educated as Papists, then the penalty, which James I. had enacted against them, of a fine of a hundred pounds, was no longer to be divided between the righteous pair (king and informer), but was all to go to the latter, to give increased incentive to eavesdropping, spying, treachery, and every kind of domestic rascality. And this was a pure and reformed religion, trying to prevent the growth of the old and unreformed one! But let us proceed with these curiosities of legislation. Those Papists who, after attaining the age of eighteen, did not, within six months, take oaths, and subscribe declarations, showing they were not, or would no longer be, Papists, could inherit neither land, tenements, nor hereditaments; and the next of kin, being a Pro-

testant—mark the diabolical significancy of that clause!—was authorized to take possession. Again, no Papist could for the future purchase any such property, either in his own or in others' names; and—as a suitable finishing touch to the whole—parent and child were sought to be set against each other by a direction, that if any Popish parent should refuse to allow a Protestant child a fitting maintenance, the Lord Chancellor should, on complaint being made, make such order in the matter as should be agreeable to the intents of the Act. So much for England. In Ireland, the Parliament, obeying the promptings of the Established Church, seemed determined to absolutely riot in its display of hatred towards Popery, or, in other words, to the religious belief of the great bulk of the Irish people. Doubtless there was for bigotry an additional zest in such a fact; and it showed its superiority to the English Parliament, while, in the main, necessarily following the latter, by one of the alterations it made in the proposed measure. It had been found, no doubt, that nature and affection had been too strong for persecution, and craft; and that even Protestant “next of kin” were unwilling to take the initiative of availing themselves of the law by which they could dispossess the Catholic heir; so it was now provided by the Irish Act, that the estates of Papists should, in all cases, be equally divided among their children, unless the persons on whom they were settled took the oaths, etc., as duly provided for conformity to the Established Church. One can scarcely realize the malignant subtlety and malice of all this, unless we remember, at the same time, the fact that, in Ireland, the next of kin was almost sure to be of the religion of the deceased—Roman Catholic—and, therefore, that the English law would have been inoperative; whereas this, if it did not do all the mischief desired, by transferring property from Catholic to Protestant hands, did, at all events, unsettle for the former all the actual foundations of law and custom; and create an undying spirit of revolt and hatred against every man and every thing that bore the name or touch of Protestantism. And so did our wise forefathers try to prevent the growth of Popery.

With equal ardour and success they proceeded to prevent the growth of Dissent. In 1702 was produced the “Occasional Conformity Bill;” which, under the plea of preventing hypocrisy in religion, and danger to the Church, sought practically to destroy William’s Toleration Act. It is curious to note how often, when men are engaged in these discreditable transactions, their very words will tend to a kind of

self-exposure—self-sarcasm. The preamble of this bill (the words of which were so strong against hypocrisy) asserted toleration, and condemned persecution for conscience sake; and then went to work to declare that all who attended the meetings of Dissenters, after having taken the usual sacraments and tests, as qualifications for office, were to be disabled from holding their employment, and mulcted in heavy and cumulative fines. And as the existing Test Act only included magistrates and corporations, now all the inferior officers, and even freemen having the right to vote for members of Parliament, were to be subject to the same measure. The House of Lords, on this occasion, proved to be less Tory and High Church than the Commons, and sought to modify its severity; but the latter stuck to their views, and, after a solemn conference in the Painted Chamber, the bill was lost. But the excitement in the public mind went on growing and growing. It was at this period, 1702, that one of the greatest of Englishmen, Daniel De Foe, stood prominently before the public as a Dissenter, defending the cause of Dissenters, but doing so in his own original way. He published a pamphlet, showing the "Shortest Way with the Dissenters." And this was the spirit and manner in which he proposed to deal with them:—" 'Tis vain," said he, "to trifle in this matter. The light, foolish handling of them by fines is their glory and advantage. If the gallows, instead of the compters, and the galleys, instead of the fines, were the reward of going to a conventicle, there would not be so many sufferers. The spirit of martyrdom is over. They that will not go to church to be chosen sheriffs and mayors would go to forty churches rather than be hanged. If one severe law was made, and punctually executed, that whoever was found at a conventicle should be banished the nation, and the preacher be hanged, we should have an end of the tale. They would all come to church; and one age would make us all one again. To talk of five shillings a month for coming to the sacrament, and a shilling a week for not coming to church, is such a way for converting people as never was known. This is selling them a liberty to transgress for so much money. *If it be not a crime, why don't we give them full license?* And if it be, no price ought to compound for the committing it; for that is selling a liberty to the people to sin against God and the Government. We hang men for trifles, and banish them for things not worth naming; but an offence against God and the Church, against the welfare of the world and the dignity of religion, shall be bought off for five shillings. This is such a shame



to a Christian Government, that it is with regret I transmit it to posterity." "Transmit it to posterity!" These were bold and brave words to use; but De Foe knew what was in him, and would yet come out of him, though the world did not; and the words have reached, and will continue through immeasurable periods to reach, their destination.

But however De Foe might think of us and our heirs, under that word posterity, he had very speedily to account for what he had said to those who were in the flesh so much nearer to him—his contemporaries. So there soon appeared a proclamation in the *London Gazette*, offering a reward of fifty pounds for his apprehension. We find him described there as "a middle-sized, spare man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion, and dark brown-coloured hair, but wears a wig; a hooked nose, a sharp chin, gray eyes, and a large mole near his mouth. \* \* \* Owner of the brick and pantile works, near Tilbury Fort, in Essex." On the 25th of February, 1703, Parliament, which had grown much excited in its mind with reflecting on the enormity of these and similarly ironical reflections, resolved to burn the book; and in July, 1704, the criminal was formally tried at the bar of a court of justice. De Foe then pleaded guilty; owing, it is said, to a promise of pardon having been given to him secretly, on the understanding that he should do so. But is not that acknowledgment in the happiest possible harmony with the original publication; nay, a kind of clencher to it, such as no man but a De Foe would have thought of striking? Yes, he was guilty; from his own mouth he said so; just as from his own pen he had called for severer punishments against Dissenters. But his judges understood him; and they showed that fact by their severe sentence—a fine of two hundred marks, three appearances in the public pillory, and subsequent imprisonment at the Queen's pleasure.

How he bore his sentence, and in what state of mind he anticipated its execution, let his "Hymn to the Pillory" reveal—written in prison, speedily put into type, and circulated everywhere:—

"Hail! hieroglyphic state machine,  
 Contriv'd to punish fancy in!  
 Men that are men in thee can feel no pain,  
 And all thy insignificance disdain.  
 Contempt, that false new word for shame,  
 Is, without crime, an empty name—  
 A shadow to amuse mankind,  
 But never frights the wise or well-fixed mind.

Virtue despises human scorn,  
 And scandals innocence adorn.  
 How have thy opening vacancies receiv'd,  
     In every stage, the criminals of state!  
 And how has mankind been deceiv'd,  
     When they distinguish crimes by fate!  
 Tell us, *great engine*, how to understand,  
 Or reconcile, the justice of the land;  
 How *Bastwick, Prynne, Hunt, Hollingsby, and Pye*,  
 Men of unspotted honesty,

\* \* \* \*

Could equal title to thee claim  
 With Oates and Fuller, men of later fame.  
 Even the learned Selden saw  
 A prospect of thee, through the law;  
 He had thy lofty pinnacles in view;  
 But so much honour never was thy due.  
 Had the great Selden triumphed on thy stage—  
 Selden, the honour of this age,  
 No man would ever shun thee more,  
 Or grudge to stand where Selden stood before.”

Let us now once more see what the official gazette had to say as to the fulfilment of the sentence:—

“*London, July 31.*—On the 29th instant, Daniel Foe, *alias* De Foe, stood in the Pillory, before the Royal Exchange, in Cornhill, as he did yesterday near the Conduit, in Cheapside, and this day at Temple Bar, in pursuance of his sentence, given against him at the last Sessions at the Old Bailey, for writing and publishing a seditious libel, intitled ‘The Shortest Way with the Dissenters.’ By which sentence, he is also fined 200 marks, to find sureties for his good behaviour for seven years, and to remain in prison till all be performed.”

So that the sentence was carried out to the letter; but, happily, to the letter only. To carry it out in the spirit was impossible. The people met in thousands, with exulting shouts, but they were shouts of honour, not of ignominy; they filled the streets about the pillory, guarded the machine, took the completest precautions against the possibility of injury to De Foe, ay, even of a hair of his head. The pillory was decorated with garlands; delicate refreshments were provided for the “criminal;” broadside copies of the “Hymn to the Pillory” were sold under the author’s eyes, and shouted up in his ears; his health was drank amid universal acclamation. A Tory satirist of the day, referring to this health-drinking, says:—





DE FOE DESCENDING FROM THE PILLORY.

*See page 261.)*

"All round him Philistines, adoring, stand,  
And keep their Dagon safe from Israel's hand;  
They, dirt themselves, protected him from filth,  
And for the faction's money drank his health."

In which the sense and feeling seem about on a par with the quality of the rhyme. Obviously, the whole affair ended in the exactly opposite conclusion to that which the Tories and High Churchmen, and the Government they inspired, had purposed. The man who was to have been made infamous was made a hero, and glorified. De Foe, very modestly, says of the event himself:—

"The people were expected to treat me very ill, but it was not so. On the contrary, they were with me; wished those who had set me there were placed in my room; and expressed their affections by loud thanks and acclamations when I was taken down."\*

Pope's well-known and disgraceful line—

*"Earless, on high, stood unabash'd De Foe,"*

has led countless readers to suppose some personal mutilations had been previously inflicted on him; but it seems to be a mere gratuitous and kindly hypothesis on the part of the poet, who disliked De Foe for his dislike to Popery.

After a year's confinement, De Foe was set at liberty through the interference of the minister Harley, and of the Queen herself, who sent to De Foe's wife money to pay the fine. This is a very remarkable fact, and appears to show that the Queen herself had been no sharer (personally) in the prosecution. We may here observe, among all the incidents of the History of Progress in Religious Liberty, none are more interesting than this appearance in the pillory of the man who was to become famous in every land, nay, in every cottage and home of every land where the English language was spoken, as the author of "*ROBINSON CRUSOE*."

These proceedings were not, of course, taken under the rule of the tolerant William III. While he lived, it is not probable that they would even have been attempted. But the accession of Anne, in 1702, gave fresh hopes to the Tories and High Church bigots, and then it was that De Foe was sought to be made their victim. He triumphed over them, but at a ruinous pecuniary loss to himself. He calculated that he was a sufferer to the extent of at least £3000. Two years later, however, he had a great political compensation, when he became

the secretary to the commissioners appointed by the English Government to meet certain Scotch commissioners, that the two bodies might negotiate for the union of their respective countries. A high honour for De Foe—a tradesman, a Dissenter, and with all the remembrances of the pillory yet fresh in every one's mind. But he gave more to, than he took from, the position, by his talents and zeal; and his name, both as secretary and as historian of the event, is indissolubly bound up with the great act of the final incorporation of the two countries.

The unsettled, excited, tumultuous state of the public mind, in religious matters (and all such matters now meant the contests for and against religious liberty), could hardly be more forcibly illustrated than in the facts of De Foe's having been sent to the pillory by the magnates of the land; and in the defiance given by the people, as shown in their treatment of him when there. There needed only a spark to set on fire such inflammable materials; and it came. A sermon was preached at Derby, in August, 1709, by Dr. Sacheverell, a divine, till then perfectly obscure; in which some of the bishops who were favourable to toleration were called perfidious prelates; the old doctrines of passive obedience, non-resistance, etc., were once more proclaimed; and the revolution of 1688 was called unrighteous, unpardonable! The sermon made a noise abroad. It was printed, eagerly read, and enthusiastically praised by the clergy generally. 40,000 copies were sold. It became a thing of national concern, and engrossed all thoughts. Sacheverell was impeached by the ministry of Queen Anne. When he first came to the House of Commons, he appeared surrounded by above a hundred clergymen, several of them being chaplains to the Queen. Everywhere the cry was raised—"The Church in danger!" And all Dissenters knew well the true meaning of that ominous cry. It was *they* who were in danger. And so it soon proved. The populace, catching hastily at some superficial elements of the case, and worked on by rich men and pious clergymen, became wildly devoted to the Doctor's cause; who moved about with an immediate body-guard of butchers, who belonged, we suppose (in military language), to the regulars; while further off, rending the air with their shouts, appeared dense masses of irregular forces, in the persons of the butchers' boys and satellites, costermongers, sweeps, prostitutes, scavengers—all, no doubt, deeply impressed with the danger of the Church! Yet, if the reader smiles, let him remember that these were among the adjuncts of Toryism and High Churchism in those days. The gentlemen of England, *par excel-*

*lence*, as they esteemed themselves, did not disdain the use of the vilest instruments, when they served any temporary purpose. The trial began in the House of Lords ; but the Doctor's discriminating supporters could not wait for the slow and tedious process of national justice ; no, they must anticipate, by taking a bit of the judicial office into their own hands. So they gutted Dissenters' meeting-houses, and made bonfires of the contents. If people could not see by that light that the Church was in danger, it is difficult to guess what would convince them. The Doctor was found guilty ; but mark the different kind of sentence passed upon him and upon De Foe. The Doctor was ordered not to preach for three years, and his books were to be burned ; and that was all ! Of course his followers treated this as a victory. Illuminations, that night, turned London into a gala scene. Medals were struck in his honour ; and, in his travels, he was everywhere fêted by the gentry and clergy of England.

And still, in spite of all, moved on the great march of religious liberty. In 1728, on the accession of George II., an Indemnity Act was passed, securing Dissenters against the consequences of a violation of the Test and Corporation Acts, which alone prevented them from holding office ; and that Act, being annually repeated, gave, in fact, thenceforth almost entire freedom to the great body of Dissenters. It was a shabby way of doing it ; but no doubt the facts involved in that shabbiness were the only remaining comfort for the immovable bigots of the day. And so, in pity to their weaknesses, or in fear of their power, if too much roused into action, matters remained in that state.

In 1749, a beginning was made towards establishing the right now enjoyed by Quakers, of affirming instead of swearing ; for in that year the Legislature permitted them to affirm in all civil cases. This appears to be one of the earliest legislative evidences of the improved position of the followers of George Fox. They had shared in all the benefits of the Toleration Act, passed after the Revolution. They had even, before then, and as early as during the reign of Charles II. (when seven hundred were freed from prison), been treated with greater favour than other Dissenters, because they were believed to be more than others inclined to support royalty, and to be little meddlesome in politics. But previous to the Restoration, they had borne their full share in the sufferings of the Dissenting body. They had gone heart and soul with the Puritans in their great principle—the right and liberty of the individual conscience. That domain they

believed to belong exclusively to God; and they maintained their belief against stocks, dungeons, stripes, brandings, and the most cruel sufferings. All punishments, therefore, for conscience sake, were contrary to the truth; provided that men did not, under pretence of conscience, prejudice their neighbours. Had they, from the time of their founder, George Fox (born 1642), confined themselves to such simple, sublime doctrines, they would have greatly lessened the persecution they so long laboured under; and they would have bequeathed, in their sufferings, a glorious example to the world. But they did not do this. Their leading and peculiar tenet—the divine force and significancy, of the Spirit, or inner light—involved a grand truth; and would have been welcomed in a manner much more in accordance with its value, if it had been divested of the excessively fanatical and antagonistic form it assumed, to all laws and governments. But what chiefly injured and degraded them, were the outrages upon sense and decency committed by so many of the members; some of whom actually went about the streets naked, denouncing judgment upon the nation. One Quaker, named James Naylor, actually fancied himself Christ; or, at least, some kind of earthly emanation from, or representative of, the Saviour. It was given in evidence against him, that he had been seen sitting in company with persons, who addressed him as “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God!” The Parliament (this was in 1656) went into the whole subject, voted him guilty of horrid blasphemy, and had very nearly put the half-crazy man to death. As it was, he was pilloried, and whipped, and branded with hot irons, in a manner sickening to behold.

One of the most remarkable of all the latter phenomena of the struggle for religious liberty, is the fact that it was hardly possible to ask for relief without calling down every conceivable kind of abuse upon the petitioner, and possibly rousing anew all the more dangerous instincts of bigotry; while, if the relief were granted, the recipients might at once make up their minds to some terrible outrage as a certain consequence. Thus, of the three greatest religious riots of the last century: Sacheverell’s, in 1709, was produced by the cry of the Dissenters for toleration; Lord George Gordon’s, in 1780—made so familiar to us all by Mr. Dickens’s vivid portraiture in “Barnaby Rudge”—followed the first great relaxation of the laws against Papists—we refer to the Act of 1778, by which all the blacker features of the Act for preventing the growth of Popery (see page 260) were



repealed ; and the outrage on Dr. Priestley followed the Act of 1779, when Dissenters were relieved from the last of the more serious practical disabilities they laboured under.

Although, as we have said, Dissenters generally were set free in fact, though not in theory, by the Church Indemnity Bill (passed after 1728), there was an exception, at first of little consequence, but growing subsequently into a very serious matter indeed:—they were obliged by the great Toleration Bill of William, to subscribe to the “Thirty-nine Articles” of the Church (some particular ones only excepted) ; and about the period of the Revolution of 1688, they could do so, conscientiously, as they had not then wandered far from the Church belief in such points. But that state of things ceased, as new sects grew into importance, who did dissent, and most emphatically dissent, from the said Articles of the Church of England—the Socinians, for instance, or, as they called themselves, the Unitarians. So in 1772, it was proposed to relieve Dissenters from this difficulty. During the discussion in Parliament, passages were read from the writings of Dr. Priestley, one of the most eminent of the Unitarian body, as he was also one of the most eminent of English scientific philosophers. “Monstrous!” “Shocking!” “Horrid!” were the exclamations that greeted the reading ; and they came from Lord Chatham. The Act did not pass till 1779, and was then so modified that only those who professed themselves Christians and Protestant Dissenters could benefit by it. In various other ways the public mind was stimulated to attack these new suppliants for relief. Dr. South had on one occasion traced the pedigree of the Unitarians back to the Devil ! and that pleasant idea was made use of. Dr. Halifax, Bishop of St. Asaph, said that Dr. Priestley, in stating his religious opinions, had completed his crimes. Unitarians were mixed up with infidels, atheists ; and as to the latter, the Archbishop of Canterbury said, from his place in Parliament, “If the atheist were to be allowed to defend his atheism by argument, he saw no reason why the thief might not be permitted to reason in behalf of theft, the burglar of burglary, the seducer of seduction, the murderer of murder, and the traitor of treason.”

When such were the feelings and thoughts of men in high places, we need not wonder at the doings of a mob. In 1791, Priestley’s house at Birmingham was burned down, and his unique and most valuable library, and collection of philosophical instruments, with unpublished manuscripts, scientific notes, etc., were all stolen or destroyed.

Other Unitarian dwellings shared the same fate. The riot increased, lasting day after day ; and on one day no less than eight houses were plundered and burnt by the drunken, infuriated populace. Certain noblemen and justices of the peace, and others, told them they had now done enough, and ought to be quiet. But no Riot Act was read ; and the entire transactions of these memorable days show that the authorities connived throughout at the conduct of the mob. Eventually, three of the rioters were hung. Dr. Priestley, three or four years later, removed to another country—the United States.



LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

(From a bust and portraits of about the time referred to.)

It will hardly have escaped observation that the great relief given to the Catholics and to Dissenters occurred in two, and consecutive, years—1778 and 1789 ; so was it again, with what might almost be called the close of their respective efforts, in 1828 and 1829. In the former

year Lord John Russell had the honour of tearing out from the Statute Book the pages inscribed with these gloomy words, relics of a gloomy past—Test and Corporation Acts. The Dissenter was then relieved from the *idea* that he was still a kind of political or official pariah. In the year following, Sir Robert Peel removed alike the idea and the fact of Catholic disability, by the passage of the great Act of Emancipation; an Act, however, which was mainly due to Daniel O'Connell. He it was who roused his countrymen to an attitude that made it unsafe for English statesmen any longer to oppose; and who (when all



DANIEL O'CONNELL.

(From a painting of about the time referred to.)

his faults or shortcomings in other matters are forgotten) will ever remain in the annals of his country as the Liberator of Ireland from the wickedness, and absurdity, and mischief involved in the bigot-legislation we have described.

We need not further follow these annals of Progress in Religious Liberty. We have reached a period of actual pause. It would be a great mistake to suppose we have reached the end. We do not speak of the minor matters involved, such as church-rates, or the slight disabilities or inequalities that may yet be found as to the respective positions of Dissenters, Catholics, or Jews, as compared with the position of the members of the Established Church. These will soon disappear, now that every body of religionists is represented in the Legislature. But there are broader and deeper questions, agitated in many minds, which will probably soon appear before us in all their true magnitude and significancy. The English Church in Ireland is so obviously an indefensible institution, except on the lowest and most dangerous of grounds—temporary expediency—that to expect it to retain its existing supremacy, while opposed to the belief of the great bulk of the Irish people, is simply to shut one's eyes to all that the history of religious liberty teaches. The Church in England occupies a different, though still by no means an unassailable, position. And with so many Dissenters and Catholics in Parliament; with Jews there also; and Quakers; every man of them a living memorial of the triumph over intolerance, we may be reasonably sure that the Church of England will eventually have to resign whatever privileges she possesses that are peculiar to herself, unless she can show to a Parliament, so variously composed, that they work undeniably for the general good. But to our minds, there are problems of still more difficult solution, and of still greater intrinsic value. These riots, Sunday after Sunday, in a metropolitan church—what do they, and the many similar squabbles occurring in different parts of the country, betoken but the necessity for some measure that shall bring clergy and laity into closer sympathy and union? And out of that necessity what can come but the development of a new kind of religious liberty—one that it is wonderful to think can have been so long delayed? We refer to the rights of the clergy, and the almost utter absence of any rights among their parishioners. The fact is, the Church is, in that respect, an almost pure despotism. And some new reformer will probably come, ere long, who will surprise men—even Churchmen themselves—by a vivid presentment of the evils they are allowing to grow around their beloved institution. It will be incredible, some day, that we, men of the nineteenth century, should have allowed pastors to be fixed on us, in our respective parishes, for life, of whose ability, or conduct, or general

agreement with our views, we have had no sort of opportunity of forming a judgment beforehand;—that their appointment should be often a matter of bargain and sale; still more often the result of their connection in blood, or by family, or other worldly interest with those rich or influential persons, who have the right of nomination. Then the fact that such a right could exist at all among a Christian community—what will our successors say to that? or to yet another fact, that, while numbers of these livings have an unnecessarily large income, and while the highest dignitaries of the Church are provided for with “palaces,” and with the revenues, and almost the social rank of princes, there are immense numbers of hard-working clergy, belonging to the same wealthy body, who live in hopeless poverty. It is when we reflect on truths like these that we can understand the saying of a man who loved the Church, Dr. Arnold, that nothing can save that Church as it now stands. May its best friends take the matter to heart, and reform it from within, before the necessity and occasion shall arise for less friendly reforms from without! But to do this, the laity must begin to think for themselves; to act for themselves; and, while leaving to their pastors full independence, within certain legitimate boundaries, must proceed to secure in the future such a share in legislating for the affairs of the Church, and in their proper administration, as common sense suggests; and as must naturally flow from the recognition of the great principle, that the Church does not mean the bishops or priests, but the entire body of worshippers; and that theirs are the paramount interests to be considered.

## PROGRESS OF CIVIL LIBERTY.



### CHAPTER I.

#### TO THE SIGNING OF MAGNA CHARTA, AND THE DEATH OF KING JOHN.

IN trying to disentangle the many different threads of narrative that run through our history, so as to be able to concentrate our attention upon those which relate exclusively to the subject of our present theme, we find that, in so far as the earlier periods are concerned, the task is an impossible one, and would be of little utility, if performed. We can understand very well now, how civil liberty differs from national liberty, from liberty of trade, and so on; and we have found, by experience, that quite different actors, and trains of thought, and external influences, are generally required to promote them. But a few centuries ago, when social life was less complex, and elementary principles were in their first stages, as it were, of fermentation, there were no such broad lines of demarcation, either in the facts or the theory of all that might be comprised within the words—Civil Liberty.

While, for instance, we know there were in these islands, in the era of the Britons, from thirty to forty distinct tribes of people, with probably many more less important ones, whose names have not reached us, and many of these tribes unknown to each other, in all probability, even by report, what liberal customs or institutions could exist, having any character of permanence? To try to erect on such a basis would have been, indeed, to build or to plant on the ever-shifting sands of the sea. Civil Liberty then meant, before everything else, aggregation of these tribes into fewer bodies.

The Romans came, and a gigantic advance was almost suddenly realized. The whole of South Britain fell under their sway, and

common interests began to be felt over a large area. Roads were made, of an extent and quality that have never been since surpassed, perhaps never since equalled, until the formation of railroads. And wonderful must have been the binding quality of such links of communication. They were then the true pioneers of civil liberty. And whatever of good the old civilization of the Druids, or the new one of the terrible warriors from the Seven Hills possessed, had now a chance of passing to and fro. That there *was* good in Druidism, and in the era it influenced, we have in our previous treatise on religious liberty had occasion to show; let us, in passing, give just two illustrations of what civil liberty included among the Britons, or, what was nearly the same thing, among their brethren, in race, religion, and social state, on the Continent. When Ambrorix, King of Gaul, had to excuse himself to Cæsar, for an assault he had made upon the Roman troops, he said it had not been done with his advice or consent; and that his government was of such a nature that the people had as much power over him as he had over them. Granting that the King was making the most of his case, he must undoubtedly have had facts to appeal to in corroboration of the general truthfulness of his statement. The people, then, were not destitute even of what we consider one of the essentials of civil liberty—the right to influence their government in all matters relating to the commonweal. Again, the position of women is universally taken as a test of the absence or presence of some of the more important phenomena of civilization. Measured by that test, our painted forefathers seem to stand forth creditably, when we know that female honour was highly valued among them; and that the institution of marriage—first of civil liberties for the female sex—was sacredly and jealously regarded. Yet, how very limited, and how very necessary, was the diffusion of knowledge in those days, we may perceive in another fact, that there prevailed a custom—let us hope it was among the most benighted tribes only—of ten or twelve families living together, the husbands and wives living in common.

The beginning of Roman domination was, it must be acknowledged, oppressive enough; and the brave Britons, understanding as yet nothing more than that oppression, fought gloriously, though vainly, to throw it off. And so towns or cities began, for the first time, to grow on British soil. Elegant buildings appeared, involving conveniences and luxuries never before dreamed of here. Arts and letters were introduced; schools established. Enterprising natives began to open

their eyes and hearts to the new future ; and to learn from their severe, but able and all-knowing conquerors. Agricola came like a gleam of sunlight to the soil. The work of organization went on fast and bravely. Roman law was introduced ; personal life and liberty were made secure ; and property, after paying the taxes demanded from it, was also guaranteed protection. But most important of all the incidents of Roman invasion—and they were so important, that language would seem strained that should attempt to show, in few words, how much the future of England was influenced by them—were the municipal governments established in direct imitation of those of the imperial city. Yes, only two or three centuries after the birth of Christ, this country, so recently occupied by half-barbarous tribes, had, under the Roman tutelage, cities and towns, enjoying their own self-government, administering their own revenues and property, seeing to their own police, and generally to the due administration of their own courts of justice. This was, we think, a magnificent instalment of civil liberty to begin with ; and, however the splendour of the institution was dimmed, or its efficiency for a time left in abeyance, during the troublous era that ensued after the departure of the Romans from Britain, it was never lost ; and we see it emerging again after the introduction of the Saxons, and mingling with the political habits and institutions brought hither by that people, until it became the nursery of England's greatness ; first, by the shelter it gave to trade, and the consequent growth of the middle class ; next, by the making familiar the business of government, to large portions of the community ; and who, being scattered at intervals through the entire country, were thus able to breathe through it a kind of free spirit of political life.

In reading the melancholy history of the next centuries, in tracing the course of those bloody, savage, and apparently interminable contests between Scot, and Pict, and Saxon, and subsequently Dane, one is apt to overlook how steadily, under and through all, went on the great march of structural improvement ; the laying of the foundations—and party-walls—and beams—of the edifice that was one day, under the name of England, to become so magnificent. The seven kingdoms of the Heptarchy—what an advance was that upon the chaotic state of things, produced at first by the loss of the Roman strong hand ; and which is revealed to us by such a fact as the following, that Penda, the Saxon king, when engaged in one of his wars,



had no less than thirty vassal monarchs, or chieftains in his camp. It was a still greater advance when Egbert reduced the whole of these seven kingdoms into one, and realized in fact—though he did not promulgate by name—the sublime idea that must have been long growing in the souls of the ablest men of the country—ENGLAND, one and indivisible !

But there were hard fighting, terrible suffering, much beating off of Danish invaders, much temporary submission to them when they could not be beaten off, before even that fact could be realized as an esta-



ALFRED THE GREAT.

blished one ; and if, at the most critical period, God had not raised one of the most illustrious of men, it is impossible to speculate on what the future might have been. But Alfred lived, and the mighty Danes knew their master ; and, under his wise administration, Danish blood began to enrich the stream of national life. And then, if it had been

humanly possible, we should have had the first glimpses of the establishment of Civil Liberty. But the stranger's hand was ever at the English throat, through the whole of Alfred's reign; and it is only wonderful how that sovereign did so much for the internal development of his country's strength, and for its most popular and cherished institutions; while men, money, time, thought, and sleepless energies were ever being lavished on the one great need of the hour—to keep out the Dane, or to control him when he had got in. Under him the nobility learned to read—they did not know how before! Learning and learned men began to be newly honoured. Communications were opened with distant countries, even with India itself. Justice was so administered, that, we are told, golden bracelets and jewels might have been hung up in the highways, and no thief venture to touch them. Unjust judges were punished even to the death. The old laws were revised by the aid of the Witenagemote, or Parliament. The English fleet became a power. And so, before Alfred died, in 901, *England* had grown more and more into a solid, stern reality, able alike to threaten and to protect, though still not able to command peace for herself at home or abroad. But the name—the title—so full of meaning, was heard at last, in the year 937, when Athelstane obtained a tremendous victory over the Danes (who lost that day five kings and seven earls), and rewarded himself and his people, by the title, KING OF THE ENGLISH.

There were still to be struggles, and during those struggles, the Danes were for a time to succeed, and to give to England one of the wisest of its kings—Canute; but England remained England nevertheless; and was obtaining, even in spite of changes of dynasty, increased power for the guidance of its own destinies. And when the Saxon element had again triumphed, and apparently set at rest all further ideas of dethroning it, a new calamity, after the death of the Confessor, was to burst upon England from yet a new direction, and Normans were to be added to all the other invaders: with this difference, that the new assailants succeeded in establishing themselves by a single decisive blow—the terrible battle of Hastings. Under the crushing sense of that defeat, our Saxon forefathers must for a time have despaired of the future of the country. Useless, then, all past struggles must have seemed. For a time only, however. The native robustness of character re-asserted itself; and in spite of the wholesale confiscations of land, and changes of proprietary; in spite of the presence and influence of a vast number of petty Norman landlords and tyrants scattered

over every part of the country; in spite of the entire monopoly of political and ecclesiastical power, in the hands of the new rulers; in spite of the lowly position into which the Saxon people and their leaders were everywhere forced, Saxon influence would increase, and Saxon interests become of more consideration; while Norman influence and interests underwent a corresponding diminution. And it must ever be so where a people (overthrown by some gigantic unforeseen casualty—and what but that was the battle of Hastings to the great bulk of the people?) remain still true to themselves; and make their oppressors understand, by the irresistible logic of facts, they are but a camp, which may any day be rooted up, removed, or overthrown, while a people is eternal. And so, at last, when all the sources which it had pleased Providence to bring together into one grand and wonderfully rich river, had been duly mingled, the final work of national organization began: the first steps being to make Saxon and Norman alike forget their distinctive appellations, and merge both into the simple title—that was to become so sublime in its simplicity—of Englishman.

Was it accident—a fortuitous concurrence of events—that brought together into one time and one reign, three such facts as these?—The king who gave the most important of the earlier charters of liberty to his subjects—Henry I.—was also the first English-born monarch of Norman descent; and was, further, the King, who, by his marriage with Maud, or Matilda, daughter of a King of Scotland, put the seal, as it were, to the then holy and blessed work of amalgamation between the two races, by marrying a maiden of Saxon blood, a descendant of the great Alfred. This lady, who was very beautiful, was by no means personally inclined to the match when it was first proposed to her. But her friends and countrymen, who saw what grand results might flow from the marriage, appealed to her in language that could not remain unanswered—"Oh most noble and fair among women, if thou wilt thou canst restore the ancient honour of England, and be a pledge of reconciliation and friendship; but if thou art obstinate in thy refusal, the enmity between the two races will be everlasting, and the shedding of human blood know no end." She yielded, to the great delight of the Saxons, but to the equal disgust of the Normans, who saw impending the gradual lessening of the power they had so long enjoyed, and abused; and so a cunning attempt was made to prevent the match. They said she was a nun; that she had been seen to wear the veil.

If true, that was decisive; so the marriage was for the moment stopped.

But the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm, one of the few good men the Norman rule had yet put into power in England, and who had been desirous to see so promising a marriage completed, determined to examine the young lady himself. And a charming bit of narrative the chroniclers of those Anglo-Saxon times have given us, in connection with their interview. She said, when called upon for an explanation, "I



HENRY I.

must confess that I have sometimes appeared veiled; but listen to the cause: in my first youth, when I was living under her care, my aunt, to save me, as she said, from the lust of the Normans, who attacked all females, was accustomed to throw a piece of black stuff over my head; and when I refused to cover myself with it, she treated me very roughly. In her presence I wore that covering, but as soon as she



was out of sight, I threw it on the ground, and trampled it under my feet in childish anger." Witnesses were called, who confirmed Matilda's testimony ; and eventually a great council of bishops, abbots, and monks, sitting at Rochester, agreed unanimously that there was no truth in the report ; and then the marriage took place. From that day might be dated the final conquest of the English people over all those sectional or internal differences, which had so often



MATILDA THE GOOD, WIFE OF HENRY I.

threatened to drive the country back into a semi-barbarism, or at least into a state of hopeless degradation under some foreign power. There was solid ground to build on at last ; and the superstructure of Civil Liberty began slowly to emerge from the soil.

The confirmation by the Conqueror, in 1070, of the laws of Edward the Confessor, may be considered as the first, in point of time, of the charters of English liberty. Rufus gave a kind of repetition of this ;

but Henry I. did so much more, as regards the words and declared intentions of the instrument, that Lord Lyttleton considers the charter granted by that King, as, in some respects, more advantageous to liberty, than the great charter itself, that was eventually to supersede it. But it came to little or nothing at the time, and was only given to win support to the kingly title, usurped from an elder brother. Stephen followed the policy of his predecessor, in both respects—the usurpation of the crown, and the bribe to the Barons for help—to support his defective claim; only, as he needed assistance more urgently, he doubled the bribe by giving two charters (~~one to the Barons, one to the Clergy~~), in which the old and broken royal promises were again repeated, and with a like nugatory effect. And so it went on till John's time, when the Barons broke out at last into armed revolt, and thus brought things to a crisis.

Let us pass to the year, 1213. It was a favourable time for the action of the Barons, precisely because it was a very bad time for the welfare of England. John's cruel and infamous pecuniary exactions had excited universal alarm and hatred. The murder of Prince Arthur deepened these emotions into horror. And then, to complete the trouble and anguish of the nation, came the Interdict, as a consequence of John's quarrel with the Pope, and by which measure England was plunged into a state of gloom and peril through social commotion, that we can but very faintly recall in modern times. Then it was that the Barons had a solemn meeting at London; and there Archbishop Langton, who was entirely with them, read the charter which Henry I. had granted, advised them to embrace its provisions—which they did—and then made them all take a solemn oath to be true to each other, and to conquer or die in the cause of liberty. Only a month or so later, John took the oath of fealty to the Pope, thus giving up all he had contended for, and the Pope took off the Interdict. The Barons, of course, knew what would follow; the Pope would change sides, and support John in all his tyranny against themselves and the people of England. But they stood firm; and, to their great joy and encouragement, Langton did the same, taking no heed of the Pope's displeasure.

John, still further to free his hands, while dealing with the Barons, arranged a truce with the French, against whom he was fighting, and turned back to England, with swarms of foreign mercenaries. On the 20th of November, the Barons met at the church of St. Edmundsbury, and swore that if the King refused the claim they were about to make,

they would withdraw their fealty, and make war upon him, until he should confirm their just petitions by a charter under his own seal. They then parted, to meet in the King's presence at Christmas. When the season arrived, he was at Winchester, but almost alone, and the attendants he had were evidently ill at ease. Suddenly he determined to hurry to London, and shut himself up in the strong house of the Knights Templars. But the Barons followed him, and still securing for each step some sacred day, they compelled him to give audience on the Feast of the Epiphany. At first he thought, by his personal behaviour, to overawe them, and he did detach one bishop and a couple of barons from the confederacy. But he was shrewd enough to see that their secession availed him little at present, though possibly he hoped to make good use of the precedent, if time were obtained. So he demanded a delay, till Easter, for consideration. Many of the Barons objected, but the majority agreed, when certain of their number undertook, as sureties, that the King would satisfy them on the appointed day. These sureties were Archbishop Langton, the Bishop of Ely, and William, Earl of Pembroke—the nobles whose effigies still exist in the Temple Church, and form one of the most precious gems of ancient art in sculpture that England possesses, and who played an important part in all those critical transactions.



WILLIAM, EARL OF PEMBROKE.

With characteristic cunning, John used the interim to win suffrages.

in every direction, yielding still further the kingly rights to the Church ; making advances even to the people whom he had treated with such contempt and cruel oppression ; and finally stimulating the national feeling and excitement in his favour, by undertaking to lead an army to the Holy Land. The Pope responded by a letter to Cardinal and Archbishop Langton (who, however, remained unmoved by it) ; and by using all his influence, through the agency of the Legate, Pandulph, to aid the kingly cause.

The grand meeting took place at Brackley, near Oxford, where the Barons appeared in all their strength and military magnificence. Two thousand Knights were in their train, and innumerable hosts of retainers. And there a deputation from John met them, and received the record of their demands. When Langton expounded this paper to John, he exclaimed, in a fury, " And why do they not demand my crown also ? By God's help, I will not grant them liberties which will make me a slave ! " Pandulph then proposed to Langton, his brother churchman, that he should excommunicate the Barons. Langton, in answer, showed he was rather inclined to excommunicate, instead, the foreign mercenaries who were supporting the King. John made some evasive offers, which were rejected, and both parties separated for the war.

And upon whom did it depend, at that moment, to determine the victory ? Why, with none other than the free Burghers of England. The Barons' hearts misgave them after their first ineffectual effort to take the castle of Northampton. But then they marched towards Bedford ; and there the people threw open the gates. From thence to London, where a similar reception awaited them, as they entered in the most perfect order and silence, during mass, on a Sunday morning. The next day a proclamation was issued, that told to all the success of the national movement ; for it called peremptorily to all Earls, Barons, and Knights, who yet remained neutral, to take part with them, or be treated as enemies of the country. John presently found opposite him the entire Nobility of England ; and behind him just seven Knights, who remained faithful to his person and cause. Of course he saw, if he prolonged the quarrel much longer, the Barons would ask the question he had previously asked himself in his irony—" Why not demand the crown also ? " So he gave way, sent the Earl of Pembroke to London to say so, and to ask the Barons to name a place and time. The answer was, " JUNE THE 15TH—RUNNYMEAD."



And there, at Runnymede, near Windsor, on the day fixed, the great meeting was held, which was ever afterwards to stand out as the most precious of the landmarks of English history and progress. The spot was a green meadow, on the banks of the Thames. On the one side stood the Barons, literally representing the entire Nobility of the country, under their leader, Fitz-Walter; on the other was John, attended by eight bishops, the Papal Legate, Pandulph, Almeric (Master of the Knights Templars), and a few other persons. Even this little host of seeming adherents had men among them known to be favourable to the popular cause.

The scroll was presented; John gave its supporters very little trouble in the way of objection or modification; he signed the docu-



RUNNYMEAD.

ment. Of course the Barons knew perfectly well the sort of man they were dealing with, and so they exacted heavy securities and safeguards. He had surrounded himself with foreign mercenaries: they were now to be dismissed from the kingdom with their families and followers. Further: London city was to remain in the Barons' hands; while Langton, their coadjutor, kept the Tower safe. Twenty-five guardians of the young liberties of the country were to be chosen by the Barons

from their body; these were to guard the integrity of the solemn measure that had just been determined on. Their power was to be as great as they all knew was the danger. If any breach of the Charter took place, and immediate redress was not given, they were empowered to act at once, and act decisively, by war upon the King. They might seize his castles, lands, and possessions, and so compel him to redress the grievance. But here the native loyalty of the country came out in the further provision, that all this was to be done without injury to the persons of the King, the Queen, and their children.

And so terminated the great day of Runnymede. The two parties separated under very different feelings. John, as soon as he found himself alone at Windsor Castle, and able to say and show what he felt, exhibited all the frenzy of a madman, raging, swearing, rolling his eyes, gnashing his teeth, and even gnawing sticks and straws in his perfectly impotent, yet uncontrollable fury. The foreign adventurers, whose doom had been sealed by the Barons, gathered about him, and suggested, naturally enough, the acceptable policy of revenge. And he at once set to work secretly to undo all that he had consented should be done. One messenger went to Rome to implore the Pope's aid; another hurried off to the Continent to gather together more men who were ready to sell their sword to any service, however base, if it were only lucrative.

The Barons, on the contrary, solemnized the occasion, and gave vent to their joy by proclaiming a tournament at Stamford, in Lincolnshire; but hearing that John was meditating a surprise upon the city of London during their absence, so far off, they changed the place to one nearer to London, and delayed the day for the rejoicing. Thus checked, John went to Winchester; and there the Barons had another interview with him, to remonstrate as to the many suspicions that he was arousing by his conduct. He strove to pass the matter gaily off—said he was quite ready to perform all his promises; and as soon as they had separated, went to his work again, of preparing for a sweeping and memorable revenge. And soon it was noised abroad that small bands of foreigners, chiefly from Brabant, were stealing into the country. Again the Barons roused themselves to action. Rochester Castle was taken possession of; and there, in a very short time, appeared John himself, throwing off the mask of dissimulation, and prepared with his hired cut-throats to lay siege to the castle. The Barons pushed on from London to its help; but found that John had

taken his measures so well, that they were stopped and driven back by the great mass of adventurers the King had collected. And so, after a gallant resistance, the castle was taken. John's first orders were, hang the whole garrison! But De Manleon, one of the foreign leaders, was wise enough to see that this would be a dangerous game for them to be concerned in; and the King was therefore persuaded to be content with the butchery of *all the inferior prisoners*, while the knights were sent to different castles in custody. That frightful incident tells, we think, more even than the greater crimes of John's career, the radical baseness, as well as the ferocious cruelty of his character. Any one with a spark of true manliness would have said, the inferior people were precisely those he could not punish, as they were obviously mere instruments in the hands of the others, who must have been mostly their feudal lords.

The Pope also now began to render aid to John in prompt answer to his late appeal. He excommunicated the Barons, and turned a deaf ear to all the counter-applications on the part of the English nation. He denounced the Barons as worse than Saracens, for taking up arms against one who had displayed the standard of the Cross for a new Holy War. Thus doubly strengthened, John marched to and fro, burning, slaughtering, hanging, and pillaging wherever he came. It is even recorded of him that in his march through Yorkshire, not only did every hamlet, however insignificant and harmless, suffer from his demoniacal rage, but that he was accustomed to set fire in the morning, with his own hand, to the house that had sheltered him during the night. When such was the master, we may guess what were the men. Every kind of cruelty, every possible outrage in the way of torture, was resorted to, to make poor people confess where they had hidden their money; for, of course, in the soldier's reasoning, it was always hidden where none was forthcoming. And through this baptism of fire and blood did the England of John's days pass, for its adherence to the principles of the Great Charter.

Before we address ourselves to the nature of that Charter, to see what were the evils it had to deal with, and how it proposed to remedy them; and, above all, how far it was worthy of all these costly sacrifices, let us pursue to its close the career of this faithless, and, in almost every way, detestable King.

He was for a time decidedly successful. The Barons were kept in the neighbourhood of London, the possession of which was all-

important to them, and were obliged to look on, while John, with superior forces, ranged the country, and took possession of one castle after another, and gave them away to the foreign adventurers, whose swords had helped to achieve their conquest. And then it was that the Barons, losing, in their fear of John and in their hatred to him, the instinct of true patriotism, resorted to a measure that not even their desire to secure the Great Charter could excuse, much less justify: they followed John's evil example, and invited foreign aid. They offered the crown to the French King, Philip, for his eldest son Louis. The offer was accepted; and, ere long, a French fleet sailed up the Thames, with a small army, and reached London. The Pope, faithful to the cause of John, his very noble son and most true vassal, threatened the French King and the Prince Louis with excommunication. But the latter then boldly advanced a claim to the English throne, on account of his having married a niece of John's; and, taking no more notice of the Church thunder, embarked at Calais, with a magnificent army, and arrived at Sandwich.

John retreated before his advancing footsteps, and went to Bristol; while Louis marched to London, where he was joyfully received by the Barons and Citizens, and conducted in solemn procession to St. Paul's. Homage was then done to him; while he, in return, took oaths to restore to all classes their good laws, and to reinstate each person in the property or estate of which he had been robbed. The contest now proceeded for some time with indecisive effect, till the presumed occurrence of a remarkable incident. A Viscount de Melun had come over with the French Prince; and he, being seized with a mortal sickness in London, sent for some of the English nobles. "Your fate grieves me," he said to them; "the Prince and sixteen of his army have bound themselves by oath, when the realm shall be conquered, and he be crowned, to banish for ever those who have joined his standard, as traitors not to be trusted. Their whole offspring will be beggared and exterminated. Doubt not my words. He who now lies dying before you was one of the conspirators. Look to your safety." The consequences of the story were serious. Some of the Barons began to withdraw, and a general doubt spread through the minds of the popular party. But while they were pausing, in anxiety, to consider what was best to be done, they heard, with a sense of inexpressible relief, that John was dead; supposed to have been poisoned by a monk, at Swineshead Abbey, in Lincolnshire.

## CHAPTER II.

### MAGNA CHARTA: WHY IT WAS NEEDED, AND WHAT IT PROPOSED TO DO.

HAS any one of our readers ever tried to realize in his conceptions what England might become, or, better still, what it has been, in the absence of all those safeguards, which we sum up in the words Civil Liberty? Does it ever occur now to any of us, as a matter of thought or gratulation, that we have progressed so far as habitually to forget that there have been times which might almost be described in the words of Hobbes, the philosopher of Malmesbury, as a state of social war—"where every man is enemy to every man, . . . wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withal? In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation; no use of the commodities that may be imported by the sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no art; no letters; no society; and, which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

Though there has been no period when the whole of this powerful description would apply to English national life, there have been several periods when society seemed fast verging to such a state of complete disorganization and chaos; and there were for long centuries evils in existence, that not only perpetually endangered the advance that was made in civilization, but which stood out in gloomy significance beside each of the early landmarks of progress.

Thus, while nothing is more common in the annals of the history of the troubled reigns of the Norman kings than to find evidences of the perpetual recurrence of the people's thoughts to the laws and customs of their Anglo-Saxon forefathers, and of their fervent love and admira-

tion for them, these said laws and customs contained some very ugly features. For instance, a father, if poor, might sell or give his son to slavery for seven years; though, in the seventh century, through the influence of the Church, the child's consent became necessary. And this custom remained even down to a period later than the Conquest. Bristol, which in more modern times obtained an evil reputation for its dabbings with the slave trade, had learned very early to fall into such practices. In a biography of the twelfth century, that of Wulfstan, who was Bishop of Worcester about the time of the Conquest, it is stated—"There is a sea-port town called Bristol, opposite to Ireland, into which its inhabitants make frequent voyages on account of trade. Wulfstan cured the people of this town of a most odious and inveterate custom, which they derived from their ancestors, *of buying men and women in all parts of England*, and exporting them to Ireland for the sake of gain." The young women, with child, were carried to market in that state, "that they might bring a better price. You might have seen with sorrow long ranks of young persons of both sexes, and of the greatest beauty, tied together with ropes, and daily exposed to sale; nor were these men ashamed, O horrid wickedness! to give up their nearest relatives, nay, their own children, to slavery. Wulfstan, knowing the obstinacy of these people, sometimes stayed two months among them, preaching every Lord's day; by which, in process of time, he made so great an impression upon their minds that they abandoned that wicked trade, and set an example to all the rest of England to do the same."

We have already seen that even the beautiful wife of Edwy, a Saxon king, was sent to Ireland to be sold as a slave; but perhaps the most signal proof of the extent to which this kind of trade was carried between the two countries—a trade that seems to show them both in so curiously inverted a position, as compared with their relations subsequently—is to be found in one of the incidents of the invasion of Ireland by Henry II. During the alarm excited by his progress, a synod was held at Armagh, in which it was agreed by all present that the English invasion was a just punishment by Heaven for their sin in buying English captives from pirates and merchants, and making slaves of them; and, in testimony of their repentance, they ordered that all the English slaves should be everywhere set free.

War, no doubt, was the first great agency in creating the slave class. We see even to the present day, among savage nations, the prevalence

of the habit of making bondsmen of those who are overthrown in fight. The Anglo-Saxon conquerors of England, no doubt, brought with them many admirable ideas and customs, that tended to promote, and were indeed fruitful germs of, civil liberty. But there was one terrible counterpoise—their reducing so many of the native inhabitants to slavery.

The subject of slavery or serfdom in this country, is too large a one for us to deal with, except in a very slight and incidental way. Nor are the facts sufficiently well known to enable us, by any amount of exposition, were we inclined to attempt it, to show accurately how it worked, or to what precise developments it led. But a few remarks may be useful. At the time of the Conquest, when Domesday Book was compiled, the people of England were divisible into five tolerably distinct classes: the clergy; the nobles, including all that we should now call the gentry; the freemen or yeomen; the common people (the churls or ceorls), subsequently called villains, from villa, a township, who seem to have had no political power; and lastly, the theowes (or serfs), who were literally slaves, valued about as highly as the cattle on the estate, and certainly not much higher, unless they became distinguished by their special qualities or skill, as in handicrafts. In exceptional cases like these, the serf would be often, no doubt, treated kindly, enabled occasionally to purchase his freedom, and sometimes manumitted by a grateful master, or by one in whose mind the gradual teachings of religion had begun to work their due effect. We find, from Domesday Book, that there were between twenty and thirty thousand of these serfs then living on the various estates mentioned in that great national record. The villains at the same time numbered about one hundred and eighty-four thousand, and are supposed to have been then, as they long remained, the most numerous class of the community. The freemen, and other classes nearly allied to them in social position, amounted to twenty-six thousand.

The villains were fixed to the soil, and had to render various feudal services, some of a humiliating kind. But it must not be overlooked that they had also claims on the soil, and could not be sent, or sold, away from it. They enjoyed the protection of law, in theory at least, if they could not always command it in practice. The poor serf, on the other hand, seems to have been absolutely at his master's mercy, and to have had neither political, nor social, nor personal claims of any kind, except such as accidental circumstances might give, and his master be willing to acknowledge.

Truly there was some need here for the growth of ideas of civil liberty ; and yet these were among the last evils that the social reformers of the middle ages could sweep away. Among partial ameliorations may be mentioned the laws prohibiting the sale of Christian slaves to Jews and Pagans ; and those of a later date, by which it was provided that no Christian, in any case, and no other persons unless they had committed crimes, should be sent out of the country. Obviously, we see the hand of the clergy here ; and the facts are so far to their honour. We might ask, it is true, how the ministers of Christ could bear to see slavery exist at all ; how they could be induced to keep any terms with it ; did we not unhappily know, that after all the growth of the human mind through so many centuries of experience—after seeing the emphatic condemnation of slavery by one civilized community after another, and the self-sacrifices that England, especially, has made to free herself from the stain, there remain bodies of men in the United States, speaking the language of progress and freedom, living under a constitution that professes to be the freest yet established among men, who keep up slavery, praise it as a divine institution, are prepared to do battle for it with all men—if they are only strong enough—nay, who seem as if they would contest the matter with God himself, if His ministers did not save them from that trouble or necessity by their complicity, by their sympathy, by their systematic prostitution of all the most sacred truths to the service of the most infamous oppression the world has yet known. No ; when we see what the clergy of the slave States of America do now to support slavery, we need not wonder that the clergy of the Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Norman times did not do more than they did (and they did do much) toward its abolition.

Probably, when populations were so small, there were many compensations to the poorest for the lowliness of their condition. It was very easy to let them have the use of the land, and that is an immense advantage to the life of the very poor. Then, when men were not only much less numerous, but the social influences, and occupations, and classes were also far less complex, individuals were probably more known to each other as individuals in adjoining spheres of being—were more interested in each other, and therefore more in the habit of helping each other. We see traces of such communion in some of the most popular institutions of the Anglo-Saxons : the frank-pledge for instance, where a certain number of men became responsible to the law for offences committed by any of their members. If these were well known,



each to each, the law was neither so difficult in its working, nor so unjust as at first glance it is apt to appear. So, again, in the earlier system of trying offences; we know that the judges and the accusers were often combined in the same persons (of course we do not now refer to such obvious corruptions of justice, as those which admitted men to have power over cases where they were personally interested); and we can perfectly understand the whole process of reasoning of our forefathers: they said, 'let us have men who were present or near when the act was committed, who knew all about it, or about the supposed offender, and let them decide the affair. The idea of division, clear and absolute, between witnesses and juries was, to their minds, an unthought-of refinement. Of that we may have more to say by and by.

And whatever alleviations might be found in the system, it was doubtless, at the best, a very bad one for the bulk of the people, whether they were villains or slaves. But it was when periods of national convulsion occurred, such as internal contests for the throne, or external struggles with invaders, or, perhaps worse still, *after* one of those periods, when conquerors and their progeny gave full play to the lust of power and license, in reaction from the stern compression to which they had submitted themselves while training, as it were, for the bloody business they had seen before them,—it was at such times that the whole weight of their ill fortune pressed upon the miserable people, and reduced them to states that it is painful even now to read of. Let us just glance at their condition, as described by the chroniclers, under the Conqueror, under Rufus, under Stephen, and under Henry I., when as we have already seen, gleams of hope burst forth in the national horizon, through the marriage of that monarch of Norman blood with Maud, who had descended from the Saxon Alfred.

And, first, let Holingshed describe the state of things that ensued upon the Conquest, under the guidance of William I. "He took away from divers of the nobility, and others of the better sort, all their livings, and gave the same to his Normans. Moreover, he raised great taxes and subsidies through the realm; nor anything regarded the English nobility, so that they who before thought themselves to be made for ever, by bringing a stranger into the realm, did now see themselves trodden under foot, to be despised, and to be mocked on all sides; insomuch, that many of them were constrained (as it were, for a further testimony of servitude and bondage) to shave their beards, to round their hair, and to frame themselves, as well in apparel as in

service and diet at their tables, after the Norman manner, very strange and far differing from the ancient customs and old usages of their country. Others, utterly refusing to sustain such an intolerable yoke of thralldom as was daily laid upon them by the Normans, chose rather to leave all, both goods and lands, and, after the manner of outlaws, got them to the woods, with their wives, children, and servants, meaning from thenceforth to live upon the spoil of the country adjoining, and to take whatsoever came next to hand. Whereupon, it came to pass within a while that no man might travel in safety from his own house or town to his next neighbour's; and every great and honest man's house became, as it were, a hold and fortress furnished for defence, with bows and arrows, bills, poleaxes, swords, clubs, staves, and other weapons; the door being kept locked and strongly bolted in the night season, as it had been in time of war and amongst public enemies. Prayers were also said by the master of the house as though they had been in the midst of the seas in some strong tempest. When the windows or door should be shut in and closed, they used to say *Benedicite!* and others to answer *Dominus!* in like tone as the priest and his penitent were wont to do at confession in the church." When such was the state of the higher orders of the people, we may guess that the condition of the lower, who were so absolutely dependent in many ways upon them, must have been deplorable. And yet, it is to be observed that the Norman dominion not only *did* not strike at them, but *could* not: it wanted the ownership, the enjoyment, the rights, and the privileges of the land, and therefore committed wholesale plunder upon the nobles and gentry, and probably yeomen, of our island; but it had no people at its back to do the actual work of cultivation, and therefore there could have been no great displacement of the labouring class. But there were doubtless sad changes, nevertheless, of all the ties of national feeling, the countless ramifications of a common social life, of the kindly charities and pleasant relationships of industrial acquaintance, for the hard, grinding tyranny of masters, who knew not, and for a long time could not know, the enslaved people who served them in any other aspect than as so many domestic enemies, ready to cut their throats in any convulsion of affairs that might give hope of a successful revolt.

But, after this terrible social revolution had once achieved its primary purpose, and there were no more English lands to be confiscated, a second revolution, equally signal, followed. The war had been

between the Norman king and the flower of his chivalry on the one side, and the Anglo-Saxon natives on the other. But, the conquest won, it was not long before the war changed its character: it was now between the King, and all the power he naturally possessed as King, and as the head of the feudality of the kingdom, on the one part, and the nobles and gentry, whether Norman or Saxon, as his antagonists; for, if there were no more lands to divide among the nobles, there was, at all events, no obvious limit to the demands which the King might make upon the possessors of those lands. And so all parties soon found. In reference to Rufus's reign, we need only quote these lines by an old historian—"He did not only oppress and fleece his poor subjects, but rather with importunate exactions did, as it were, *flea off their skins.*"

The pressure, under such circumstances, would of course steadily increase as it bore downward; and be felt, as it reached lower and lower strata of the people, more and more severe and intolerable. And then came civil war; and then the horrible scenes that have been recorded in the Saxon Chronicle in connection with Stephen's time, when "all was dissension, and evil, and rapine. The great men soon rose against him. They had sworn oaths, but maintained no truth. They built castles, which they held out against him. They cruelly oppressed the wretched people of the land with this castle-work. . . . They filled their castles with devils and evil men. They seized those whom they supposed to have any goods, and threw them into prisons for their gold and silver, and inflicted on them unutterable tortures. Some they hanged up by the feet, and smoked with foul smoke; some by the thumbs or by the beard, and hung coats of heavy mail on their feet. They threw them into dungeons, with adders, and snakes, and toads. . . . They made many thousands perish with hunger. They laid tribute after tribute upon towns and cities; and this, in their language, they called *tenserie* [chastisement or punishment]. When the townsmen had nothing more to give, they set fire to all the towns. Thou mightest go a whole day's journey, and not find a man sitting in a town, nor an acre of land tilled. The poor died of hunger; and those who had been men well to do, begged for bread. Never was more mischief done by heathen invaders. . . . To till the ground was to plough the sand of the sea. This lasted the nineteen years that Stephen was king, and it grew continually worse and worse."

At this period, therefore, while the nobles were able, on account of the precarious position of the king, to prevent his oppressing them, they were, as an order, so thoroughly selfish and disorganized, that they do not seem to have cared how they oppressed the people below; provided only that each noble, or clique of nobles, did not injure the sources of his own or their immediate support. It must have been a welcome day when the King recovered such independent strength (in the time of Henry II.) as to destroy all these nests of plunder. What a notion does it give us of the state of England at that time, to know that *eleven hundred castles*, all regularly fortified places, were then destroyed. Civil liberty would have had a hard time of it, we suspect, in its earliest growth, if these centres of petty, but therefore only the more merciless and unintelligent, despotism had remained to overshadow the soil.

But it was a fortunate thing for English liberty that the people of the middle ages had not to fight on their own account a national battle with aristocracy, but were able to leave that business to the king. And that, when he had cleared the way of the intermediate evil, by reducing the power of the aristocracy to reasonable limits, and begun to play the tyrant over all, there were consequently two powers in place ready to give battle to him, if he overstepped his proper boundaries. The English people must have felt this truth instinctively before they logically perceived it, even for themselves, or they would not otherwise have so soon forgiven the terrible sufferings they had endured under the Norman chieftains, as to accept them eventually as their leaders, and to entrust to their hands the mighty issues for themselves and their posterity that were involved in the struggle for Magna Charta. But whatever lessons tending to that end they might need had been given by the exactions of the kings; who, in ordinary times, appear to have set no bounds to their rapacity; whatever could be wrung out of their subjects they took, leaving only what could not. The last illustration of this kind we shall give refers to the reign of Henry I., who was popularly called the Lion of Justice, and no doubt there was some truth in the appellation, if applied to the latter years of his reign. But it seems a mockery when connected with the earlier portions. The change is said to have occurred through a vision; and at any rate the recorded story is very dramatic, and tells but too plainly what was the condition of the English people, wanting, as we have

said, all the guarantees of civil liberty that now make our life so different.

Henry was passing over to Normandy, after, probably, fresh severities in exacting supplies from the exhausted English, when he had, one night, a strange dream. First, he saw gather about him great numbers of the country people, with spades, scythes, and pitchforks (their only arms), and they looked on him with angry and threatening countenances. Then they disappeared, and, in their place, he beheld masses of armed soldiery. These, too, passed away; and, lo, a body of bishops, with their croziers and insignia, appeared, bending over him, as if ready to fall upon him and kill him with their staves. Henry, in great anguish, awoke, leaped up out of his bed, snatched his sword, and called loudly for his attendants, so vivid was the impression upon his mind of immediate danger. But, as that died out, he began to see a divine hand stretched forth to save him. He read the riddle aright—that all orders, people, clergy, and nobles were being urged to a common course of defence against the King; and, from that time (so runs the story, and there is much to confirm its truth), Henry became a different man, and grew almost as unjust in establishing justice as he had been previously wilful and violent in wrong doing. In the twenty-fifth year of his reign, for example, he had all the moneyers of the kingdom, above fifty in number, brought up before the Court of Exchequer, there examined by the treasurer as to their share in the business of debasing the coin, which was then much complained of, and, subsequently, the whole (with four exceptions) were taken into another room and had their right hands struck off, and other mutilations inflicted upon them.

In similarly rough fashion he, from time to time, marked his sense of the conduct of other classes of his servants, such as the tax collectors, and the followers of his Court. But the evil seems to have reached too great a magnitude to be remedied by any merely arbitrary or impulsive fits of royal indignation at the discovery, now and then, of its excesses or tendencies. Contemporary writers tell us, that under this monarch, the insolence, and the rapacity, and the brutal violence of the King's officers exceeded all that had been yet experienced by the unhappy people. "God knows how unjustly this miserable people is dealt with. First they are deprived of their property, and then they are put to death. If a man possesses anything, it is taken from him; if he has

nothing, he is left to perish by famine." So says a contemporary writer. Need we wonder that the King's sleep was troubled; or that he saw looming through the dim future the realities of which his vision warned him, an union of all classes, people, clergy, and nobility, to bring him or his successor to account, and make such charters as he had granted real living instruments, not mere paper promises, intended to be broken as soon as made. And, as we have seen, the time foreshadowed by Henry's vision came, and Magna Charta was obtained, by the grand union of the entire people under the baronetage of England.

And now let us consider what was the nature of the document that professed to deal with such serious evils.

Magna Charta may be divided into three portions—one relating to the clergy, whose general liberties it confirmed; one relating to the barons or fief-holders, whose rights were also expressly guaranteed, and to whom, especially, was secured the exclusive right (as against the King) of determining in the great national council (the forerunner of our parliament) upon any escuage or extraordinary aid to be granted to the King, while the mode and occasions for convening that council were also carefully defined; and yet a third portion, relating to the community at large, and which became the groundwork of English liberties, and the safeguards of the future magnificent destiny of the country. The points here involved are very numerous, and range over an immense variety of subjects. The following summary shows all the more important:—

*General Protection of the Subject.*—Harsh amercements were forbidden, also illegal distresses or other processes for the recovery of debts or services due to the crown. Thus, no freeman, merchant, or villain was to be unnecessarily fined for a small offence; the freeman was not to be deprived of his tenement, the merchant of his merchandize, or the villain of the implements of his husbandry. The Barons of the 13th century could anticipate, it seems, the feeling and words of the poet of the 16th century,

"You take my life  
When you do take the means whereby I live,"

and so they interposed, to prevent the King or his followers, in the name of law, from inflicting such injuries. The abuse of the prerogative of purveyance and prescription was similarly guarded against: no officer of the crown was to take away horses, carts, or wood with-

out the owner's consent, etc. And under this head we must place, as the crowning glory of the charter, the words that do not need to be written in letters of gold to appear unto the eyes of all men worthy of the precious meaning they bear and enshrine, in which the charter undertakes that no freeman shall be arrested, or imprisoned, or dispossessed of his tenement, or outlawed, or exiled, or in any wise proceeded against, unless by the legal judgment of his peers [or equals], or by the law of the land.

*Administration of Justice.*—"Justice shall not be sold, refused, or delayed to any one." None but able and upright judges were to be appointed. The chief court, that of Common Pleas, was no longer to be moveable, following the King in all his progresses, to the great pecuniary injury of the wealthier suitors, and the absolute practical denial of justice to the poorer ones, and to the inconvenience, distress, and injury of all, but to be fixed at Westminster. On the other hand, the local administration of justice was equally cared for, by the arrangement that two judges were to be sent into each county four times a year; and there to hold assizes, with four knights, who were to be elected by the county. Regulations were established for the due holding, in fit places, of the other inferior courts, as the county courts, the sheriffs' courts, and the courts-leet.

*Matters of Public Concern.*—Uniformity of weights and measures was enjoined. New encouragements were afforded to commerce, by the engagement to protect merchant-strangers, and by forbidding the alienation of lands in Mortmain. All exclusive grants of fisheries were prohibited for the future; also the erection of new bridges, in a manner, or by means calculated to oppress the neighbourhood.

*Municipal Government.*—The liberties of the city of London, and of all other cities, boroughs, towns, and ports of the kingdom, were confirmed and established:—not one of the least valuable parts of the great charter; for it was in those little, but healthy and vigorous communities, that the practical strength of the people then lay.

Such are the chief provisions of Magna Charta, which was signed by Robert Fitz-Walter, Marshal of the Army of God and of the Holy Church, and by a host of other nobles, most of whose names have since been conspicuous through all the varying phases of English history.

Such a check upon royal misgovernment was not to be submitted to by kings without tremendous efforts to escape from it, and to

punish all who had aided in its formation. John died, but the principle of tyranny did not die with him. His boy-son and successor, Henry III., eagerly imbibed all the views and principles that his father would have desired, had he lived, to have instilled into him; and this, too, in spite of the sagacity, and example, and success of the noble Earl of Pembroke, who became Henry's guardian and protector. Under his council, the great charter was again and again re-affirmed; and under his vigorous administration the French were got rid of, and England was left once more to itself to fight out its own internal disputes, so far, at least, as any foreign nation was concerned. But just as the King grew in years and mental strength, and was able to take the conduct of affairs into his own hands, so did he exhibit more and more the utter faithlessness of his character; his unwillingness to keep the engagement made for the support of the great charter, and his irrepressible desire to restore the same kind of license and tyranny that had originally made the charter so great a necessity; and to seek foreign aid as instruments. But the man and the time had come, when the work of social redemption, though a grand instrument of political reform, was to be finally achieved; though none of the actors could have foreseen how that result would be realized, or what disappointment and sufferings awaited both the parties before the *promise* would be attained, which it seems to be the inevitable law of progress in our country to discover as the resting-place for every movement. This story, one of the most interesting, tragical, and precious in all English history, we must reserve for another chapter.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE STORY OF DE MONTFORT.

SIMON DE MONTFORT was the son of a Count De Montfort, who had become but too well known through Europe for his severity as one of the leaders of the armed attacks made upon the heretic Albigenses. He became Earl of Leicester in right of his mother; and is supposed to have been little known in England until the year 1238, when he came to this country, and married the Dowager Countess of Pembroke, a sister of Henry III. The King little thought when he promoted



this match so determinedly, what a terrible antagonist he was bringing to his court; and just as little did the English Barons, who objected to the match because De Montfort was a foreign subject, anticipate that that very man would shortly be the leader of the national party. But the marriage took place, and then De Montfort allowed very little time



MONTFORT'S SEAL AND INSIGNIA.

to elapse before he showed how he should use the position he had gained. There were many fears that he would favour foreigners, and would advocate in various ways a system of policy founded on foreign data and influences. He settled all those fears promptly by exhibiting a stern determination to oppose, by every means in his power, all encouragement of foreign favourites or foreign encroachments. His ability became no less conspicuous than his patriotism. We say

patriotism, because we do not think the accidental fact that De Montfort was born and bred in another country, while allied in blood as well as by more material ties with this, should deprive him of the right to elect his home, and determine to abide by it, and share all its fortunes, whether of weal or woe; and as De Montfort unquestionably did all this, he was a patriot; and the quality of his patriotism appears to us just as pure, and noble, and brilliant as if he had first drawn breath upon British soil. And so his own contemporaries the English people thought. Never, probably, did a man under such unfavourable circumstances so rapidly become popular, or enjoy so thoroughly the national confidence. But he was no demagogue, or the Barons would have stood aloof; while, on the contrary, he won their goodwill, and, to some extent, retained it to the last, through events of a character calculated to test to the uttermost every man's faith in, and fidelity towards, him. All qualities, as in the later case of Cromwell, seem to have existed in De Montfort's mind and character, that could fit him for the tremendous position that he had to fill. He was not only patriotic, national, able, and liberal, but he was devout, so that the clergy were also with him; he had literary tastes, that won the suffrages of the thinking order, and who, through their poets, repaid him, at a later period, for all his sufferings. Lastly, he was a soldier, equal in every respect to the best masters of the art of war that were then known.

Of course there was one exception to De Montfort's popularity, and a somewhat noticeable one, though one that he and every other Englishman was prepared for, when the Earl began to exhibit his true nature—the King!—*he* saw the terrible mistake he had made, quarrelled with his dangerous subject, and now most detested brother-in-law, and so obtained a sort of opportunity for banishing him. Then, dreading, apparently, the thoughts of the people at home, and thinking, as kings often do think under such circumstances, that it is well not to drive men to extremes by too marked hostility, he conferred on De Montfort the government of Guienne, then belonging to Henry III., where he appears to have acted rightly and wisely under very difficult and discouraging circumstances, but not so as to avoid making enemies among the turbulent nobility. These complained to Henry as to a kindred spirit, who, doubtless, wished nothing better than publicly to disgrace De Montfort; so he hastily recalled him, and then, adding insult to injury, stigmatized him as a traitor. De Montfort, at that word, saw





HENRY III. SWEARING TO OBSERVE THE CHARTERS.

*See page 363.*

no longer a King, his sovereign, in presence, but a man who had placed himself on De Montfort's own level. He answered, therefore, as any other man, or gentleman, or true knight, might have done, who had equal spirit. He told the King he lied, and warned him plainly that, but for his kingly rank, he would have made him repent so grievous a wrong. Henry dared not just then destroy De Montfort, and De Montfort, on his side, could proceed no further with his personal quarrel. He retired awhile to France; but then a sort of reconciliation was made up, and De Montfort returned. And now the crisis in public affairs had come, and with it the necessity for De Montfort's struggles, triumphs, and martyrdom.

Let us now pause to look upon a memorable scene. The place is the interior of Westminster Hall, the time May 3, 1253. There stands Henry III., in front of a screen specially erected for him, and around are all the great dignitaries of the Church; while outside these are the Barons and their retainers. The bishops and abbots are apparelled in their canonical robes, and each of them holds a lighted taper in his hand. One is offered to the King, but he refuses it, saying he is no priest. The limitations of men's consciences are certainly among the most inscrutable of mental problems. Henry, as his past and subsequent career shows, was intending treachery, even while submitting to ceremonies of the most awful character, especially instituted to bind him irrevocably to his word and oath. He can stand all but the taper—that he refuses. The Archbishop of Canterbury now appears before all the people, and denounces, in language of terrible solemnity and significance, sentence of excommunication against all those who directly or indirectly shall infringe the charters of the kingdom. Not a single impressive feature of this, as yet, most impressive of all ceremonies is omitted. The Catholic Church is thoroughly earnest, though on the people's side. Now the prelates and abbots dash their tapers to the ground, and as the lights die out and the smoke ascends, they cry, "May the soul of every one who incurs this sentence so stink, and be extinguished in hell." The King, for whose special, personal, almost individual benefit, the whole solemnity is instituted, now responds, placing his hand upon his heart—"So help me God! I will keep these charters inviolate, as I am a man, as I am a Christian, as I am a knight, and as I am King crowned and anointed."

Simon de Montfort was present during the solemnity; and we may

speculate on his thoughts as to the probable benefit that would result. In any case, he must have thought, and others like him must also have thought, that if the King still proved faithless, all these preliminary attempts, so obviously made in earnest, would be their safeguard against future calumny.

In 1258 an assembly met at Oxford, which the Royalists nicknamed the "Mad Parliament." But, if mad, there was method in its madness. There came to it all the great barons; and attended (Parliaments in those days would have been of little value wanting such adjuncts) by all the inferior nobles and knights, who held fiefs from them, and these again having individually their retainers and vassals at their back, in armed array. The "Mad Parliament" took this preliminary measure, in order to guard against any attack, while sitting, from the foreign cut-throats whom the King held in pay. The "Mad Parliament" next appointed a Committee of Government, of twenty-four members, twelve selected by the King, twelve by themselves. There was, it seems to us, fairness and reasonable loyalty as well as method in this arrangement for the better government of the country. The head of this supreme council of the nation was De Montfort. The King swore solemnly to maintain the ordinances of the council, and Edward, Prince of Wales, reluctantly followed his father's example.

The next step of the "Mad Parliament" was to enact that the freeholders of each county should elect four knights, whose express business and duty it should be to inform the Parliament of all breaches of law and justice; an admirable provision, one would say, if any but a "Mad Parliament" had made it; for this simple reason, that it was not—and for some time had not been—so much the theoretical violation of Magna Charta that the Barons and people complained of, but the utter disregard of it that was shown by all the King's officers, in the administration of the national affairs, and especially in all sorts of matters where the due exercise of justice was concerned. The "Mad Parliament" also ordered that a new sheriff should be annually chosen by the freeholders of each county; and that three sessions of Parliament should be held yearly, at fixed periods, which were duly enumerated. We confess our inability to see how the sanest or wisest Parliament that ever sat, could have done much better than did the "Mad Parliament," in enacting these things; and so one is constrained to look on the feelings and views of the Royalist

party, from whom the appellation sprang, for the tokens of that madness which they so absurdly tried to fasten upon their opponents, and which, therefore, probably might with justice be applied to them. And certainly that blindness to all the signs of the times, which does sometimes afflict the rulers of the earth, to a degree so great as to suggest incipient insanity was shown now by Henry III. and his advisers; and in consequence we turn to new and terrible episodes in the history of the Progress of Civil Liberty.

At first the secret fires smouldered, and some years passed of doubt, difficulty, and political struggle; the obvious insincerity of the one side perpetually urging the other onward to increasingly severe measures of counteraction and safety. One natural but unfortunate consequence was, that the committee of twenty-four became at last the representatives of one party only; the party of the Barons and the people it is true; but having in it few or no supporters or friends of the Royalists, with whom, after all, compromise in the end was inevitable. We do not blame the popular party; probably they could not help themselves. There are times when compromise is impossible—when the initiatory principles must run through their predestined career, partly to achieve certain results that cannot afterwards be undone, partly to leave lessons for the future, even when the immediate measures established may have passed away: lessons, no doubt, for both sides; warning one not to demand everything that strict right would urge in the face of obstacles that must sooner or later weaken their value if apparently obtained; and warning the other of the ruinous self-destructive nature of all tyranny, but especially of that which once finds itself face to face with antagonistic principles, adequately represented by numbers, wealth, intellect, and popularity.

It now became but too plain that there was only war to be looked for to bring matters to a determined issue, and settle whether England was really to be free, or enslaved. Let us hurry on to the more salient events. Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I., had at first showed signs of sympathy with the national and charter cause, probably because he had no sympathy with his father's unmanly evasions and criminal deceptions. Edward had no love for the charter, and he could be (when he thought it politically necessary) more cruel than Henry ever was—witness his subsequent treatment of the glorious Wallace—but he was a manlier character, and possessed a far profounder and more statesman-like mind. The first thing that seemed to have

turned him completely against De Montfort and the Barons was, that the latter, while continuing to maintain their authority, through the committee of twenty-four, compelled Henry also to consent that the same authority should be perpetuated through the reign of his successor. From that moment Edward's conduct changed, and he became De Montfort's deadliest enemy.

The first great shock of arms took place at Lewes, on the 14th of May, 1264. Henry led the Royalists, and had with him his brother, the King of the Romans, his son Edward, the great nobles of the houses of Bigod and Bohun, the Percys, Earl Warenne, and the Scotch Comyn, Baliol, and Bruce. De Montfort was seconded by the Earls of Gloucester (a kind of would-be rival to the great Earl) and Derby, the two Despensers, De Roos, Marmion, Grey, Fitz-John, Seagrave, Lucy, Vesey, and others. De Montfort ordered all his men to wear a white cross on the breast, just as though they were crusaders engaged in a holy war; a noble and beautiful thought, and illustrative of the religious fervour of the Earl's mind. His friend, the Bishop of Chichester, gave a general absolution to all the army, and promised to those who fell a welcome in Heaven as martyrs. The battle began. Edward, with a body of trained cavalry, fell upon a mass of burgher-militia from London; an interesting fact, by the way, as showing how the heart and hand of the great city felt and acted in this crisis. The citizens were beaten and cruelly slaughtered; and the Prince thought the battle was half won. Meanwhile, De Montfort rushed upon the King; beat away, with resistless force, all opposition; took Henry prisoner; and took also the King of the Romans, Comyn, and Bruce. When Edward returned from his bloody pursuit, it was to learn these facts; and while stupified by them, he was himself charged, overpowered, and taken prisoner also, to join the already distinguished host of captives. Five thousand men fell that day. A more decisive victory, to all appearances, had never been won.

And now came the crowning glory of De Montfort's life, in an act, the consequences of which have been obviously grand beyond all power of description, if we only refer to the known facts up to the present day, but which puts on even a sublimer aspect, when we speculate on future developments. To understand this act, we must premise a few words. The earliest form of our Parliament was, doubtless, the Saxon Witenagemot, in which we know that matters of the highest import, such as the succession to the throne, were



considered and determined upon. It is probable that this early institution was only a simple development of the courts of justice. What *they* did in matters of individual concern the Witenagemot undertook in matters of national concern. And the machinery of the one was, of course, exactly adapted to the use of the other. The precise amount of power possessed by the Saxon people in this, their rude Parliament, is not now ascertainable; but there are reasons for thinking that they had such power originally, but by degrees lost it. It is very plain that the injurious and degrading tendencies of the Norman Conquest were not checked by any element of this kind. When the struggle for the charter began, the question of parliaments or no parliaments became a very interesting one; in fact, the idea must have originated then, if it had not previously existed; for the Barons could not act together, without solemn meetings and careful deliberations, and every such meeting became, in fact, a virtual parliament. And we have seen, in the great charter, that the Barons, with instinctive sagacity, had fastened upon precisely the two points that make up the essence of parliament, when they exacted, by that instrument, that sums of money, under the name of escuage, or extraordinary aid, should not be granted to the King, except by the national council; and when they took care that time and place for the meetings of such council should be duly fixed. Established meetings, and absolute control over the national purse, what were these but the germs out of which have expanded the mighty instrument in the hands of liberty and civilization, that we designate by the name Parliament? But how did it expand? What an immense gulf divides the National Council of De Montfort's earlier days, from the National Council of the second half of the nineteenth century! Take one single feature of the difference—but a feature that is marvellously expressive of all that lies beneath. The National Council of the Barons was really an assemblage of the great landed proprietors of the nation, and of the Church; nothing more. Who, then, introduced the people into it? Above all, who introduced into it the wisdom, and knowledge, and business habits; the courage and skill, and organization; the faith in liberty, derived from the long practice of liberal institutions, possessed by the citizens of our great towns, scattered over all the country? When we can answer that question, we know from whence England has derived the greater part of its vital stamina, whether we refer to its life, in or out of Parliament. It was

De Montfort who did all this. De Montfort! A man, whose name the reader will scarcely be able to find in any of our biographies, and encyclopædias, and whose shadow seems to stand apart in sad dignity, waiting for the hour when Englishmen of all ranks shall look up to him as one of the greatest of her children, loved and honoured no less because a child by adoption, not blood. Yes, it was De Montfort who saw, with an almost prophetic eye, what that National Council ought to be—must become—to join together the existing forces of England for the defeat of tyranny, and to direct them wisely in the hour of triumph towards the grand future which he must have seen, however dimly, opening. In 1265 met the first true English Parliament. Not a trace can be discovered before that year of any representative of a city or borough having obtained a place in the National Council. Then, while Henry remained a prisoner in De Montfort's hands, writs were issued in the King's name to all the sheriffs, directing them to return two knights for each county, and two citizens or burgesses for each city or borough within the said county. Does not this fact alone show how instinctively true had been the prompt appreciation of the great Earl by the people of England? They were now, indeed, repaid. As Sir Bulwer Lytton nobly said for a very ignoble purpose, in a recent discussion on parliamentary reform, democracy is like the grave, which ever cries, Give! give! but which never yields back again what is once resigned to it. (We do not remember the exact words, but this is the idea.) So now, democracy having gained this all-important step, never lost it; and the National Council of the Barons of England became an assembly into which was introduced the thin edge of the wedge, which was soon to split it into two chambers, Lords and Commons, and thus to bring into prominence and relief the last, as the greater of the two powers; and which has, consequently, in spite of all check, gone on, fulfilling the natural laws of its life, and growing stronger and stronger, till it is confessedly now the virtual ruler of the nation.

Yet this very bequest to the people of England, so immeasurably precious, so far beyond all other of De Montfort's services to us, was in all probability precisely the measure that worked his own downfall. The Barons who were, like him, patriotic and far-sighted, shared doubtless in his enthusiasm, and accepted the self-sacrifice he proposed to the order. Others, not patriotic, saw probably how valuable

such a measure would be for insuring temporary strength and safety, and were therefore on the whole content. But there were also Barons who were neither patriotic nor far-sighted, and who beheld in such radical measures of (so-called) political reformation, only the future debasement of their rank and privileges.

And under such conditions, minor difficulties grew into unnatural importance. For instance, the very superiority of the great Earl's mind and character had tended to make him many personal and bitter enemies among the Barons, whose reputation he overshadowed. And so at this eventful period, dissension broke out. Intrigues were rife, and some now fell from De Montfort's side, who, had they obeyed their own instincts of what was right, or cared even to be consistent with their own antecedents, would have battled with him, and perhaps helped to realize a different conclusion. But strong in the excellence of his cause, and in the support of all that was most free and enlightened among the people of the country, De Montfort still went on his way, fearless and determined, towards the end, which was now near.

The Earl of Gloucester began the evil game, by openly separating himself from De Montfort, and appearing in arms as his rival. A plan was also secretly concerted and successfully carried out for enabling Prince Edward to escape and join Gloucester. The Earl of Derby, who had fought with De Montfort at Lewes, was the instrument in this business. On meeting, the Prince was made to swear to protect the Charters, govern according to law, and expel foreigners; and then the leadership of the army was handed over to him. Edward was next joined by Earl Warenne, who had escaped from Lewes, and by other Royalist leaders, and so ere long he found himself strong enough to march against De Montfort.

They met at Evesham; and there is no doubt of the fact, that the younger had out-generalled the older soldier in all the arrangements for that meeting. De Montfort was in a dangerous position, militarily speaking, at Evesham; but still he needed only a junction with certain forces under his son, to make him safe; and he thought he saw them coming towards him, that morning of the 10th of August, as he gazed in the direction of Kenilworth, and recognized his own standards—undoubtedly his—advancing. Yes, they were his standards; but, alas, held by the soldiers of Prince Edward; who had surprised the son at night, near Kenilworth,

routed him, took most of his knights prisoners, and then had practised the deception upon the father, of approaching him in the guise of friends and followers. De Montfort saw that this, the first blow that had been struck, was, in all probability, a fatal one. He was shut in by the semicircle of the river Avon, almost to the extent of three sides of his army, while on the fourth was advancing the overwhelming host of the Royalists. De Montfort saw, and acknowledged all. "They have learned from me the art of war. . . . The Lord have mercy on our souls, for our bodies are Prince Edward's!" But if so,



THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

the Prince had yet to win and pay for them. De Montfort knelt in prayer, took the sacrament, and then, hero-like, in perfect calmness, began. He had only one hope, that of forcing the road to Kenilworth. He tried, and failed. Of course Edward had foreseen that danger, and guarded against it. De Montfort then, with his best friends and followers, formed into a solid circle on the summit of a hill; and there threw off the charges of the enemy, one after another, till failing strength, and failing numbers told upon them, and made the contest

utterly hopeless. Again and again did the glorious valour of De Montfort and his brave band achieve successes; but there were ever pouring in, fresh and fresh levies of Royalists, in apparently endless reinforcement. De Montfort's horse was killed; but the Earl rose to his feet, and fought on. When at last he asked if quarter were given, the reply was—not to traitors! De Montfort saw then his dear son Henry fall, saw his few remaining friends disappear, one by one, down into that bloody heap of trodden corpses; and at last, sword in hand, he sank too.

Prince Edward then gave full swing to the remorselessness of his nature. It is horrible to have to write, that all the barons and knights of the national party, one hundred and eighty in number, were slaughtered. As to the great Earl himself, it would pollute these pages to relate the treatment his body received. But like many other “unsuccessful” men, De Montfort had really achieved results that even he might have considered worth all the cost. He had, as we shall yet see, secured the Charter—he had called together a parliament of the people, which no power was ever strong enough to drive back into nothingness—and, lastly, he died worshipped in the very hearts of the people whom he had so earnestly striven to serve. The following ballad, with which we conclude De Montfort's story, was only one of the many outpourings of the national spirit, on receiving news of the black tragedy of Evesham:—

## I.

In song my grief shall find relief,  
Sad is my verse and rude;  
I sing in tears our gentle peers,  
Who fell for England's good.  
Our peace they sought, for us they fought,  
For us they dared to die;  
And where they sleep, a mangled heap,  
Their wounds for vengeance cry.

On Evesham's plain, is Montfort  
slain,  
Well skilled the war to guide;

Where streams his gore shall all deplore  
Fair England's flower and pride.

## II.

Ere Tuesday's sun its course had run,  
Our noblest chiefs had bled;  
While rush'd to fight each gallant knight,  
Their dastard vassals fled;\*  
Still undismay'd, with trenchant blade  
They hew'd their desperate way:  
Not strength or skill to Edward's will,  
But numbers gave the day.

On Evesham's plain, etc.

\* This probably refers to some Welsh troops, the only ones who appear to have incurred such disgrace.

## III.

Yet, by the blow that laid thee low,  
 Brave earl, one palm was given ;  
 Nor less at thine than Becket's shrine  
 Shall rise our vows to heaven !  
 Our church and laws, your common cause ;  
 'Twas his the church to save ;  
 Our rights restor'd thou, generous lord,  
 Shalt triumph in thy grave.  
     On Evesham's plain, etc.

## IV.

Dispenser true, the good Sir Hugh,\*  
 Our justice and our friend,  
 Borne down with wrong, amidst the  
 throng,  
 Has met his wretched end.  
 Sir Hugh his fate need I relate,  
 Our Leicester's gallant son,  
 Or many a score of barons more,  
 By Gloucester's hate undone.  
     On Evesham's plain, etc.

## V.

Each righteous lord who brav'd the sword,  
 And for our safety died,  
 With conscience pure shall aye endure  
 Our martyr'd saint beside.  
 That martyr'd saint was never faint  
 To ease the poor man's care ;  
 With gracious will he shall fulfil  
 Our great and earnest prayer.  
     On Evesham's plain, etc.

## VI.

On Montfort's breast, a hair-cloth vest  
 His pious soul proclaim'd ;  
 With ruffian hand the ruthless band  
 That sacred emblem stained :

And, to assuage their impious rage,  
 His lifeless corpse defaced,  
 Whose powerful arm long saved from  
 harm  
 The realm his virtues graced.  
     On Evesham's plain, etc.

## VII.

Now all draw near, companions dear,  
 To Jesus let us pray,  
 That Montfort's heir his grace may share,  
 And learn to heaven the way.  
 No priest I name ; none, none I blame,  
 Nor aught of ill surmise ;  
 Yet, for the love of Christ above,  
 I pray, be churchmen wise.  
     On Evesham's plain, etc.

## VIII.

No good, I ween, of late is seen,  
 By earl or baron done ;  
 Nor knight or squire to fame aspire,  
 Or dare disgrace to shun.  
 Faith, truth, are fled, and in their stead,  
 Do vice and meanness rule ;  
 E'en on the throne may soon be shown,  
 A flatterer or a fool.  
     On Evesham's plain, etc.

## IX.

Brave martyr'd chief ! no more our grief  
 For thee or thine shall flow ;  
 Among the blest, in heaven ye rest  
 From all your toils below.  
 But, for the few, the gallant crew,  
 Who here in bonds remain,  
 Christ condescend their woes to end,  
 And break the tyrant's chain !  
     On Evesham's plain, etc.

What a long-drawn wail of agony from the very soul of England have we here ! What a memory as regards the past, what a prospect as regards the future ! Yet be of good cheer, brave hearts ! you will

\* Sir Hugh Le Despenser, made Grand-Justiciary at the time of enacting the provisions of Oxford.

soon find De Montfort's spirit alive again, more potent than ever, to protect you.

While the Earl of Leicester's magnificent services in the cause of civil liberty have not sufficed, in later days, to make him popular with, or even to keep him in the general recollection of, his countrymen (though we believe, that among the resurrections of reputation which advancing knowledge will bring about, *his* will assuredly be one of the most signal), there was, in all probability, with him at Evesham, a man who has become wonderfully popular, but precisely for those qualities which least entitle him to remembrance. Who ever thinks of Robin Hood but as the gallant freebooter, the consummate archer, the physical-force champion and eternal conqueror at quarter-staff, the man who set at nought all social laws, to create a code for himself and his companions in the forest, and who won, somehow or other, the affections, if not the respect of posterity, by the personal qualities he exhibited in such an otherwise indefensible career.

Yet, in truth, if people had ever paused to meditate, they must have seen that cause and effect were here obviously very inadequately connected together, and that Robin Hood must have been a different man, and have had different motives from any ascribed to him, before he could have attained such fame, or have been able to maintain such long-continued independent power. We owe to a French historian, Thierry, the first gleams of the light of common-sense upon this subject. And others, since then, have laboured to make known the truth about the outlaw of Sherwood Forest.

First, then, let it be recalled to mind, that one of the consequences of the Conquest was the inclosure, for the King's use, of immense slices of English land to make forests, which, with the purlieus adjoining, were all placed under special and cruel laws. To kill a deer was really a worse offence in the eyes of the Norman King, than to kill a man. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the sufferings caused to the people of England, directly and indirectly, by the creation of these forest laws. And then began, in all probability, a species of general resistance upon the part of the population. No man of Saxon blood but would scorn to attach any real stigma to the legal offences thus created; while poor men, who had been dispossessed, or desperate men, who were thirsting for vengeance, would seek every opportunity of responding to the declarations of law by bolder and bolder dis-

regard of it. The vast extent of woodland through the country made it easy for those men to live virtually beyond the reach of the King's officers. And thus, we have no doubt, came to be established a kind of smouldering, but universal and permanent, revolt among the poorer classes of the community, against the forest laws. Of course the rise, every now and then, of a man of superior ability among the outlawed wanderers, would give fresh popularity and strength to the ideas involved, till there was generally felt to be something to be struggled for, and heroes to be enshrined in the people's hearts for their successful devotion to it.

That, we take it, was the state of public feeling and opinion when Robin Hood's name first became bruited abroad. But there is no reason to suppose that he was one of the ordinary herd of outlaws—men at once needy, desperate, and naturally law-hating; on the contrary, the first fact really known about him is one of the greatest possible significance in enabling us to determine for him a very different character and antecedents. Fordun, the Scottish historian, in the century following that which witnessed the battle of Evesham, when describing the wholesale confiscations that ensued, as against De Montfort's followers, says—"Then *from among the dispossessed and the banished* arose that most famous cut-throat Robert Hood, and Little John, with his accomplices; whom the foolish multitude are so extravagantly fond of celebrating in tragedy and comedy; and the ballads concerning whom, sung by the jesters and minstrels, delight them beyond all others." So, then, Robin Hood was one of the national party—was one of the followers of De Montfort—was, in all human probability, one of those who fought at Evesham, but escaped; and then, like several other men of greater political note, maintained a state of individual independence in the forests, pending such time as they might see England once more in possession of the guarantees of civil liberty, as expressed in the great Charter. Think of Robin Hood then, first as a patriot, dispossessed of his patrimony and banished, because of his patriotism; then as a man who, in defiance of all that the Royalist authorities could do, after the defeat of the national party, remained in permanent opposition and protest to their rule; and, lastly, as a man whose whole life became a kind of incarnation of principles the very opposite of those which were so hateful in the forest laws;—think of Robin Hood thus, and it is surely easy to understand his



wonderful popularity; and equally easy to see why, in lapse of time, the special and exact conditions of this popularity would fade away and be forgotten, in favour of some personal adjuncts of it that were more permanently calculated to arrest the popular eye and heart.

We can only add to these observations a strong recommendation to all persons who take any interest in the subject, to read the poem which so worthily commemorates him—"The Lytell Geste"—and which stands out so markedly from the sing-song rubbish that has been allowed to collect around and almost smother the noble forester's fame. Let us add, that it is highly probable that the political consequences of Robin Hood's independence in the forest were more important than we should at the first glance suppose. Edward, both as Prince, and, after his father's death, as King, exhibited individually a kind of consciousness of the necessity of meeting the wants of the people with regard to their demands for charters of liberty. But if after the bloody defeat of Evesham, he had nowhere seen a sign of future trouble breeding, it is most likely he would have relapsed into the ordinary ways of kingship, and withheld the coveted rights, simply because he thought he could withhold them. But when, on the contrary, he saw two years occupied in reducing the various partial outbreaks that followed on the death of De Montfort; when he saw the Cinque Ports still maintaining actual warfare with the royal ships; and heard of men, under Adam Gordon, ravaging home districts like Surrey, Berkshire, and Hants; when he saw the Isle of Ely maintain a protracted resistance to the royal forces; when, above all, he saw Robin Hood, in the long range of northern forests, defying all attempts at capture or destruction, even after all other opposition had been silenced, he must have seen that to keep open so dangerous a national question as that of the Charter, was only to invite national support to the first powerful body of men, under a trusted leader, that might again challenge the royal authority.

We believe it was these and similar considerations that led Edward I. to settle the whole question at last definitively, by incorporating the charter into the *actual* law of the land; and by such measures, and others calculated to promote the due administration of justice between man and man, to put an end to all further agitation for civil liberty, while also creating for himself the title of the English Justinian. We cannot enter into the details; so shall pass on, after giving a single illustration. In the 25th year of his reign,

all the previous confirmation of the charters were, in effect, emphatically reinforced by the famous statute *De tallagio non concedendo*, which expressly declared that no tallage or aid should be enforced by the King without the consent of the archbishops, bishops, earls, barons, knights, *burgesses*, and other freemen of the land; or, in other words, without the consent of that kind of parliament which De Montfort had called into existence, and which was now regularly held! The



EDWARD I.

same statute also laid down, more broadly than ever, the rights of the subject: "that all men, both clerks and laymen, should have their laws, liberties, and customs, as largely and wholly as they had used to have the same at any time, *when they had them best*," etc. Yes, the man who had overthrown De Montfort, now carefully built up the edifice for the establishment of which De Montfort had suffered martyrdom; the conqueror was thus himself conquered; and Robin

Hood, in all probability, lived long enough to see that everything he, too, had struggled for, was realized at last.

The death of Robin is so charmingly described in a ballad of later date than the "Lytell Geste," but so thoroughly in the spirit of that poem, that we do not doubt it is merely a version of some older ballad, contemporary, perhaps in fact a part of, the "Lytell Geste." When dying at the nunnery of Kirklees, whither he had



THE DEATH OF ROBIN HOOD.

gone to seek medical aid, and where it is supposed he was treacherously done to death by one of the women, Little John demanded permission to burn down the place in punishment. These were the dying words of the forester in reply:—

"I never hurt fair maid in all my time,  
Nor at my end shall it be;

But give me my bent bow in my hand  
 And a broad arrow I'll let flee.  
 And where this arrow is taken up,  
 There shall my grave digg'd be.

"Lay me a green sod under my head,  
 And another at my feet :  
 And lay my bent bow by my side,  
 Which was my music sweet ;  
 And make my grave of gravel and green,  
 Which is most right and meet."

They obeyed him, and there—

"— they buried bold Robin Hood,  
 Near to the fair Kirkleys."

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE ABOLITION OF SERFDOM.

WE have seen how necessary it is that De Montfort's character and life should be better appreciated than they are among Englishmen; but at all events he had, as has been shown, great compensations. But there is another man to whom the working-classes of this country are as much indebted for their personal freedom, as the middle-classes were indebted to De Montfort for their political liberty; yet, who is little thought of by these working-classes, while with all other sections of the community he has been dismissed, as it were, to a kind of contemptuous infamy. Even with indulgent readers, the best excuse that could be offered was the original provocation he received, when his daughter was grossly insulted by the collector of an unjust poll-tax. It has been thought a happy and not unmerited ending for Wat Tyler, when he was stricken down by the sudden, and apparently treacherous blow of Sir William Walworth, who became in consequence the chief hero of the affair. Yet, how monstrous all this must seem to any one who looks at the simplest facts of the case! When Wat Tyler appeared at the head of that terrible body of armed men—a hundred thousand strong—which he and his cause had recruited from the actual toilers of the country, what were the demands formally made by him to the King? It is useless asking this question from Royalist

or other historians—men into whose soul had not entered even the dimmest consciousness of the wrongs and degradations of the great mass of the people—who still remained serfs, or villains. No; we must ask the men themselves, as Richard II. asked them, through their leader, what they desired. And this was the recorded reply:—

1. *The total abolition of slavery for themselves and their children for ever.*

2. The reduction of the rent of good land to fourpence the acre.

3. The liberty of buying and selling, like all other men, in all fairs and markets.

4. A general pardon for all past offences, including of course this, the greatest offence—to take their own cause into their own armed hands, as the Barons and freemen had done before them for Magna Charta.

Reading this, does it not appear monstrous that history should continue to blacken men's lives, and pervert great national events, as it does in the usual narratives of the conduct and aims of Wat Tyler? Putting aside the merely economical question of what ought to have been the fair rent of land, or whether it could be fairly fixed by laws at all, did ever men ask for more legitimate concessions than are involved in the other propositions? But perhaps, to many minds, it may be more pertinent to ask, what were the consequences of this insurrection? Well, it was a seeming failure, certainly; for Wat Tyler was murdered—there is no other word that can so well express the act of the chivalrous mayor. The people were confused, misled, broken up, and punished; the grant of the abolition of serfdom, at first conceded, was afterwards contemptuously withdrawn. Could there be a more complete failure? Yet let us pause. Only seventy years later, another formidable popular insurrection breaks out under Jack Cade, and it does *not* ask for the abolition of serfdom. Why? Because it is already dead. Wat Tyler had really killed it, when he struck his self-sacrificing blow at the institution, by his appearance in arms; and though it seemed to live on, it really languished, and at last disappeared, historians hardly know how.

And there cannot be a more instructive view afforded of the progress in civil liberty, realized by the *common* people, during the said seventy years, than the difference exhibited between the demands of Wat Tyler and those of Jack Cade. What this leader and the people



under him insisted upon, was the redress of public grievances, as relating to illegal taxation, the corrupt administration of justice, and, above all, to the composition of parliament: they openly complained of the interference of the nobility in the elections of knights of the shire, and demanded that the free choice of representatives should be left, where the law had placed it, in the hands of the people. So that having become socially free, the minds of the people, the actual working-classes, were now seething with ideas of political liberty.

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CHARLES I.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE ACCESSION OF KING CHARLES THE FIRST.

ALTHOUGH we do not consider it advisable to devote any special chapter to the long period that was occupied by the other reigns of





HAMPDEN, CROMWELL, AND OTHER PURITANS, WHEN ABOUT TO EMIGRATE, STOPPED  
BY ROYAL PROCLAMATION.



the Plantagenet dynasty, or by those of its Tudor successor, since they were not marked by any of those turning points in the history of Civil Liberty that make epochs—the Reformation excepted, which we have already dealt with in the Progress of Religious Liberty, and which did not produce its political effects till the reign of the Stuarts;—although, we repeat, we do not propose to devote a separate chapter to such a period, yet there were many incidents in it that tended on the whole to confirm to the people the ground already achieved, and to enable them the better to prepare for the tremendous struggle with Charles I., when a grand effort was to be made to drive them back, and to undo all that patriots and martyrs had done for the cause of civil freedom and good government. That cause, since the days of De Montfort, has been really identical with the cause of the Parliament, and may be so treated. Not that the growth of the many influences among the people that have subsequently influenced their representatives at Westminster do not deserve the most attentive consideration of the student of the history of the Progress of Civil Liberty; but that this could not be usefully done here; or in any but a very enlarged space, and at the expense of great labour and time. And it is not necessary for our present purpose, as all such influential results inevitably find their way into action at last by means of Parliament. That was the instrument that De Montfort placed in the hands of the English people, for its own redemption and development; and we shall see that king and people alike knew its power. Let us briefly glance at some of the more salient phenomena of each reign.

Edward I., having tried ineffectually to tax his subjects without the concurrence of Parliament, was obliged, as we have seen, to enter into a solemn compact with the latter, by which he formally, for himself and heirs, renounced all such future attempts. He had been previously compelled to renounce tampering with the composition of Parliament, in these words:—"And because elections ought to be free, the King commandeth, upon great forfeiture, that no man, by force of arms, nor by malice or menacing, shall disturb any free election."

Edward II.—that weak and despicable monarch—was not likely to accomplish what his strong, able, and stern father had failed in; and his attempts only helped to enforce another signal parliamentary lesson—the responsibility of ministers—when the royal favourite, Gaveston, was swung high on the gallows, as the end of his panderings to royal favour and despotism.

In that reign, the power of the people was strengthened by the creation of twenty new boroughs ; by the recorded determination to hold Parliament " once a year, or twice if need be ;" by the establishing, as a precedent for the future, that all money supplies must be devoted to the special services for which they were given ; and, lastly, by the Commons sitting apart, and claiming equal power with the other estates as an independent body.

Edward III.—a brilliant and popular king, and thoroughly skilful warrior—again tested the question whether royalty could break down the parliamentary hold over taxation, but again there was a failure ; followed—necessarily—by a more complete acknowledgment of the power of the people in their representative capacity. *Seventy Parliaments* were summoned during that long reign of fifty years ; so that the " twice if need be," proved no vague threat or aspiration, but a simple prevision of the truth. The Statute of Treason was now passed ; thus reducing to exact law the arbitrary and cruel modes or customs that previously existed, letting the King do almost just what he pleased, under the pretence that some crime of unutterable horror had been perpetrated, that he called treason. The crime was now defined to include conspiring the death of the King, levying war against him, and adhering to his enemies. The judges were prohibited from applying the penalties for treason to any other offences than these, without an express application to Parliament. Before this Act passed, the King could with ease, or at least with little difficulty, destroy any man, under the charge of treason, whose public policy he might disapprove. And even after its passing, corrupt judges were found, from time to time, so to read the statute, that revolting injustice was done, to please the monarch. In this King's reign, Chaucer popularized, if he did not almost construct (in a literary sense) the language, by writing his glorious poems in the native tongue ; the Parliament did the same kind of thing for legislation, by declaring, in the thirty-first year of the reign, that the English language was to be used ; lastly, it was in this reign Wycliffe originated the grandest event of modern times—the Reformation.

Richard II. gave a new proof of the power of Parliament ; and for him a very melancholy one, by so mismanaging matters, that he was deposed in favour of Henry of Lancaster, whose sole claim to alter the succession was that which Parliament gave him.

Henry IV. thus became, in a sense, at his very birth (as a king)

the creation and creature of Parliament; and however he might have been inclined to forget the origin of his power, the Parliament removed the possibility of his so doing. For instance, in the year 1406, they expressly limited the succession to his sons and heirs male; thus, of course, retaining not only the reversionary right of nomination in case of failure of heirs male, but also asserting and guarding the principle—that Parliament could even alter the royal line of succession. The “divine right” of kings was thenceforward utterly disavowed.

But though the Plantagenet sovereigns, after the great failures of the first and third Edwards, had no hope of successfully overcoming the claim of the people to tax themselves through their representatives, or to interfere avowedly with the pure and due administration of justice, they never gave up the hope to evade the provisions they were pledged to; or their attempts to commit, in a gentle, unobtrusive, but fraudulent way, those outrages upon the political privileges, or pecuniary means, of their subjects that they dared not perform in an open and bold manner. So “indulgences” were euphoniously talked of—meaning gifts of money to the king; and these were so suggested, that the *givers* could not help themselves; then, too, “loans” were arranged, though with little intention on the one side, or hope on the other, of repayment. Justice was similarly dealt with. Wrongs were committed and no redress could be obtained. Persons were often imprisoned by a mere royal order. Torture, a thing absolutely illegal, began to be enforced in State prosecutions; thus in the fifteenth century, during the religious troubles, a rack was introduced to the Tower, and from time to time made use of. All these things were in violation of law; but then how easy it was to keep unpleasant incidents of royal government secret from the people, when there was no free press—no press, in fact, at all! The people, no doubt, were at the same time very indulgent on the whole to their monarchs; for *there was no standing army* to beget jealousy or alarm in their minds. Nay, as they were themselves to a very great extent armed, if only with the terrible weapon the bow, and could therefore soon make an *impromptu* army against the king, they felt instinctively somewhat of the magnanimity of conscious strength, and were generally inclined to be only too confiding; partly because they liked to confide in their king, partly because they knew they could, at the worst, always enforce a complete change, or even retribution, by the right of insurrection. The constitutional checks, therefore, while perfect in principle, and in-

cluding literally everything we now most value, were by no means minutely efficacious in practice; and so were often—too often—abused. Yet a sharp eye was kept upon all such abuses by the Parliament; and when they got too serious, they were laid hold of, and dealt with firmly and temperately. Thus, in the reign of him whom Shakspeare has made so attractive to us, under the appellation of Bolingbroke, it was enacted that no judge should be able to release himself from the penalties due for any illegal and iniquitous measures, by pleading the orders of the king, not even if he alleged that his own life had been in danger. It was in this reign, also, that Parliament began to appoint the treasurers of the Crown (they might rather have been called the treasurers of the people, if we reflect on the true meaning of the act); whose duty was to see to the disbursement of the supplies granted; and who were to render regular accounts to the House: a most important precedent. They also now regulated the royal household; and obtained the establishment of a council to advise the king; he agreeing to be governed by their advice; and that council being sworn to observe and defend the amended institutions confided to its care. It would be impossible to overrate the value of this measure; as at once establishing the rule—the King reigns, he does not govern. Ministers only can govern, and they are responsible.

Henry V., the youthful conqueror at Agincourt, gave to the people's representatives their crowning victory, in what is called Privilege of Parliament. It was now acknowledged that the House of Commons had absolute power over its own internal economy in all matters of legislation, and that its members could not be impeded during the exercise of their functions. One slight but not uninteresting illustration may be here given of the evils that previously existed. The Parliament having consulted and agreed upon a measure, left it to the judges to put the whole into legal forms and words; and, it appears, the latter had been accustomed frequently to tamper with the document, acting in the presumed interest of the king: this was now remedied.

The Wars of the Roses, comprising the reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV., and Richard III., though they inflicted much suffering on the actual combatants, and on England generally by the withdrawal from labour of so many stalwart men, and by the injury done in the interminable marchings to and fro of the opposing forces, and by the weight of taxation, regular or irregular, made necessary by such a state of things, yet did wonderfully promote the future prosperity of

the country, because it strengthened the foundations of Parliament. The aristocracy was awfully stricken by these wars. When Richmond became Henry VII., and summoned his first House of Lords, he could only bring together *twenty-nine* peers, including some of recent election. That branch of the legislature, therefore, was reduced almost to nothing for the time; but the middle classes, on the contrary, had been growing stronger all through the contest, chiefly by the increasing prosperity and power of the towns; which were not only able to take care of their own inhabitants, but to receive in great numbers the gradually dispersing combatants; men of skill in warfare, and naturally possessing, in many cases, other valuable qualifications—as wealth, intellect, knowledge of arts and of the world. And so there was increasing mixture of different classes of people: serfs became freemen (by their mere presence for a sufficient term in boroughs); freemen became wealthy men; wealthy men became borough representatives, and knights of the shire, in the House of Commons; and from the richer and more influential classes who had thus risen, by various steps or gradations, many passed into the ranks of the aristocracy, and became peers of the realm. The interests of the land, and the interests of trade, met frequently in the same men, or in the same corporate bodies. Of course, the sudden striking off so many heads from the top must have produced in the social framework an effect analogous to that which would happen in an army; where, by some sudden calamity, there was a tremendous wholesale destruction of the superior officers; that is to say, there would be immediate active promotion at work through the entire mass. Add to all these traits of the time the obvious fact, that when there were rival and warring sovereigns, each of them would, for his own sake, do his best to please the Parliament, and we can understand how it was that Philip de Comines (the historian of Louis XI., and contemporary with Henry VII.), who studied carefully the condition of England, said it was the best-governed country of which he had any knowledge; and we can appreciate the full force of Macaulay's epigrammatic expression, "Thus our democracy was from an early period the most aristocratic, and our aristocracy the most democratic in the world; a peculiarity which has lasted down to the present day, and which has produced many and important moral and political effects."

Henry VII. founded a new—the Tudor—dynasty, which lasted about 120 years. During this time taxes were often exacted by loans or gifts; penal statutes were dispensed with by the mere royal will.

or proclamation ; direct legislation was even occasionally taken out of the hands of Parliament by the promulgation of kingly edicts, in order to meet temporary emergencies ; and personal throned violence rose to its very climax in Henry VIII.

Yet even he, who could send his wives to the scaffold with as little remorse as a butcher sends his sheep to the slaughter-house, could not succeed when he tried to extract, without the sanction of Parliament, a large sum of money from his subjects' pockets. He was told he was dealing with English, not French men ; with freemen, not slaves ; and he soon found himself and his officers confronted by armed hosts. He yielded, and, in effect, publicly owned himself in the wrong.

And now came the Reformation, and the crucial tests of the innate qualities of the Church of Rome ; which had, for the most part, up to that time, been with the people in all their advances towards knowledge, civilization, and good government ; excepting when special circumstances, or the individual influence of remarkable men, caused a temporary disunion. That Church now drew back, appalled at the sudden increase of free thought ; and at the new security for the wide dissemination of the results of such intellectual freedom in the existence of the printing-press. It became hostile to all further advance, and has so remained from that day to this. We speak of it, of course, *as a Church* (for the remark would not be true of its members as individuals). Yes, the Roman Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation was tried and found wanting ; and has ever since been a complete clog upon the march of humanity. One consequence of this was an injury, for the time being, to the cause of civil liberty and political progress. The Catholics rapidly lost influence over the young, vigorous growing mind of England ; and what influence it did retain was expended in struggling to keep off the detested "heresy" of the new doctrine ; and as the reforming party, at the same time, were wrapped up in the sole idea and aim—religious triumph—and as Henry promised to give them that if they only followed him through enough of dirt and blood—why, they did so. Parliaments sunk fearfully then—all virtue, all strength, all stamina seemed to have left them. Whatever the King required they agreed to do. If to-day he was inclined to be Catholic in his measures, "So be it," said the Parliament ; if to-morrow he thought, on the whole, well of Protestantism, and said, "Pass that !" again they submissively said, "We will." Did he think one of his marriages illegal, and one of his children illegitimate, of course the amiable Parliament

thought so too, and deposed queens and altered successions just as he pleased. Basest, most monstrous of all, it allowed men like Sir T. More and the Earl of Surrey to go to the scaffold without a shadow of guilt upon them. But even now it did exist, and that was something; and occasionally it performed a good action, which was still more; for instance, it extended the right of representation to Wales; and on the broad principle that representation was essential to good government; and that those who were to be bound by laws should have power over the laws: thirty members were then added to the House of Commons. The privileges of Parliament were also successfully asserted by it, when a member was arrested. The Chancellor cunningly suggested that he would grant a writ of privilege; but the Commons declined any other writ than the mace of their own Sergeant-at-arms.

Edward VI.'s brief reign we shall not dwell on; but his successor, Queen Mary, gave something like new life and vigour to the House of Commons by her determined efforts to make it a Romanist assembly; and by the vigorous repulse which the Protestant feeling (no longer working under false conditions) gave to her. In vain she packed the House with her creatures, the House still did not make things pleasant to her; would not, for instance, give her husband Philip an atom of real power, the name of King was all they were inclined to bestow upon her gloomy darling.

This reign was rendered remarkable by the secession of a small band of patriots (for there were patriots again now; the race was growing up once more since the brutal Henry had disappeared, and the upas-like influences of his reign had died out), because, as they said, they found all efforts to serve their country unavailing. The Queen set her Attorney-General at them; but he did not find it safe or easy, we suppose, to do them any damage, and so the matter dropped.

At last came Elizabeth, like a great burst of sunshine over the broad land of England; but the beneficial influence she was to exert was essentially religious and social, not political. As Mr. John Forster, in his essay on progress in "Lardner's Cyclopædia," happily points out:—"With regard to the people, it was always Elizabeth's fondest purpose to place herself at their head. The idea which had entered her great spirit seems to have been that she could fling down every barrier between the sovereign authority and the popular allegiance. Her subjects she would have made her children. Her kingdom was to be to her as her own palace. It might be said, even, that she did not so

much desire to be a sovereign prince as to be a sovereign demagogue. She would mix with the people, gladly make their interests hers, condescend to their amusements, uphold their prejudices, gossip with them, joke with them, swear with them, but never, on any pretence, suffer them to mount higher than her knee. Their aspiring tendencies she never countenanced. While she patted a mayor or an alderman on the head, she disdained to lift her finger for the support of a Spenser or a Shakspeare."

But the patriots had returned to the House, in spirit, if not actually in the same individual forms; and there are signs, through the latter part of the reign, that they became more and more courageous and uncompromising, even though they were, for a time, but a sort of forlorn hope. Let us honourably particularize two men—Mr. Strickland and Peter Wentworth. It was the last who told so capital a story of himself and the Archbishop of Canterbury:—

"I was," said the bold and honest speaker, "among others [during] the last Parliament, sent for unto the Archbishop of Canterbury, for [on account of] the articles of religion that then passed the House. He asked me why we did put out of the book the articles for the homilies, consecrating of bishops, and such like? 'Surely, sir,' said I, 'because we were so occupied in other matters that we had no time to examine them how they agreed with the Word of God.' 'What!' said he, 'surely you mistook the matter; you will refer yourselves wholly to me therein?' 'No; by the faith I bear to God,' said I, 'we will pass nothing before we understand what it is; for that were but to make you popes. Make you popes who list,' said I, 'for we will make you none.'"

Another incident of Elizabeth's Parliament is worth dwelling on. On a certain occasion, when subsidies were wanted, and not so readily forthcoming as the Court gentry thought they ought to be, Mr. Serjeant Heyle thus addressed the House:—"Mr. Speaker, I marvel much that the House will stand upon granting of a subsidy, or the time of payment, when all we have is her Majesty's; and she may lawfully, at her pleasure, take it from us. Yea, she hath as much right to all our lands and goods, as to any revenues of her own. *At which all the House hemmed, and laughed, and talked.*"

But the patriots found that their labours were not all thrown away. When the question of monopolies, which had long vexed the English mind, again engaged its earnest attention, something decisive was



achieved. The English sovereigns had always been allowed the supreme direction of such matters as weights, measures, coin, commercial police, markets and fairs, etc.; but the exact line dividing these matters from a sort of general power to do anything the king might please for the regulation of trade and commerce, had never been defined; so, to get money, monopolies had been allowed to individuals. Elizabeth pursued this policy to so great an extent as scandalized even her loving Parliament, and so brought matters to an issue. It was high time, when such commodities as iron, oil, vinegar, saltpetre, coal, lead, starch, yarns, skins, leather, flax, could only be obtained at exorbitant prices, through the power of the monopolists, who enjoyed exclusive rights over their sale. The House of Commons not only compelled the virgin Queen to pause, but brought her to consent to the entire abolition of monopolies; and a very noble and affecting speech she made to the House when they were reconciled. This occurred but shortly before her death.

With the advent of James I. came a new spirit, and a new state of things. James, unlike his predecessors for centuries, was a strictly legitimate king; lineally descended, not only from William the Conqueror, but also from the Anglo-Saxon Egbert. He wanted, therefore, no parliamentary support for his title. On the contrary, he came to the throne haunted by a sense of the divinity which doth hedge in a king, and which it is a crime to interfere with in any way. It was now, as Mr. Forster explains, "gravely maintained that the Supreme Being regarded hereditary monarchy, as opposed to other forms of government, with peculiar favour; that the rule of succession in order of primogeniture was a divine institution, anterior to the Christian, and even the Mosaic dispensation; that no human power, not even that of the whole legislature, no length of adverse possession, though it extended to ten centuries, could deprive the legitimate prince of his rights; that his authority was necessarily always despotic; that the laws by which in England, and in other countries, the prerogative was limited, were to be regarded merely as concessions which the sovereign had freely made, and might, at his pleasure, resume; and that any treaty into which a king might enter with his people was merely a declaration of his present intention, and not a contract of which the performance could be demanded."

And as if those ideal notions were not sufficient to alarm Parliament, James, from time to time, roused and irritated them by the plain decla-

ration of his belief that they held their privileges during his pleasure only, and that they had no more right to inquire into his doings than into the doings of God. But these large words could not conceal the waverings and cowardice of a very small mind. Again and again he tried to obtain supplies by threatenings and cajolings, whilst declining to redress grievances; and he even ventured to dissolve the legislature, and to commit members to the Tower for opposing his behests; but, somehow, he yielded in the end to that Parliament, even in matters that most deeply touched him; he resigned ministers to its vengeance; and he sank, every year that he lived, deeper and deeper into contempt, ridicule, and detestation. It was evident the nation would be a nation of atheists before long, if it were true that belief in the divinity of James was identical with belief in a Higher Power. And it was at this time that the new energies given to the national mind and character, by the doctrines of Wycliffe and Luther, began to turn more and more into the path of political regeneration. And it was at this time, also, that a question arose which demanded instant solution—how was the king to be entrusted with the possession of an army, which became indispensable through the war with Spain? Give him that, without first obtaining from him absolute safeguards for its use, and there was an end to all prospect of civil or religious liberty. And just when that question demanded its natural answer, James died.

Can we now understand, as we review these incidents and facts, and as we dwell upon these recent theories, the mental position of the young king, Charles, on his accession to the throne? He had lived, domestically, in an atmosphere that was filled with untruthfulness and with despotism; and although his intellect and tastes could not but be outraged by his father's personal bearing, and although he could not but see that his father had, on the whole, failed to realize any of his despotic aspirations, yet he doubtless thought to himself, with pardonable pride, that he, Charles, possessed in perfection the very qualities that his father lacked; and that, on the whole, he was evidently called to the great work of rolling back the tide of popular demand; and of living and moving, "every inch a king," according to the old instincts of kingship. It is but justice to Charles to bear these facts in mind; though, after all, they go but a short way to excuse, and not at all to defend, the criminality of his conduct. What he meditated was surely as black a treason against the people of England as the heart or mind of man could well devise. He and his advisers (Buckingham, till he was

assassinated by an instrument of the popular vengeance, then Strafford) knew quite well into what state the constitution of England had at last settled itself—that of a limited monarchy; and yet they plotted to carry the country back to the former state, which had existed several centuries before—an unmitigated despotism; in which, if Parliament were to live at all, it would live merely as an instrument of the kingly will; a sort of easy way for the better getting at the people for taxa-



WENTWORTH, EARL OF STRAFFORD.

tion, military service, and so on; a state of things, in short, such as we see established at the present time across the channel; where the mockery of legislation is kept up, without deceiving any one but the most ignorant of the community into any belief of its efficacy or virtue, except so far as it may tend to keep alive a kind of flickering light, playing about the seat or actual government; which, under better auspices, may yet once more burst into potent heat and flame.

Lord Macaulay has shown, with his usual clearness and picturesqueness of language, what was the actual state of relation betwixt the king and the people, when Charles came to the throne; and the historian was too moderate a man to press at all unduly against the royal side. Speaking of the limited monarchies which sprung up in western Europe during the middle ages, he says that amongst these "kindred constitutions, the English was, from an early period, justly reputed the best. The prerogatives of the sovereign were undoubtedly extensive. The spirit of religion and the spirit of chivalry concurred to exalt his dignity. The sacred oil had been poured on his head. It was no disparagement to the bravest and noblest knights to kneel at his feet. His person was inviolable. He alone was entitled to invoke the estates of the realm; he could at his pleasure dismiss them; and his assent was necessary to all their legislative acts. He was the chief of the executive administration, the sole organ of communication with foreign powers, the captain of the military and naval forces of the State, the fountain of justice, of mercy, and of honour. He had large powers for the regulation of trade. It was by him that money was coined, that weights and measures were fixed, that marts and havens were appointed. His ecclesiastical patronage was immense. His hereditary revenues, economically administered, sufficed to meet the ordinary charges of government. His own domains were of vast extent. He was also feudal lord paramount of the whole soil of England, and in that capacity possessed many lucrative and many formidable rights, which enabled him to annoy and depress those who thwarted him, and to enrich and aggrandize, without any cost to himself, those who enjoyed his favour.

"But his power, though ample, was limited by three great constitutional principles; so ancient that none can say when they began to exist; so potent, that their natural development, continued through many generations, has produced the order of things under which we now live.

"First, the King could not legislate without the consent of his Parliament. Secondly, he could impose no taxes without the consent of his Parliament. Thirdly, he was bound to conduct the executive administration according to the laws of the land; and if he broke those laws, his advisers and agents were responsible.

"No candid Tory will deny that these principles had, five hundred years ago, acquired the authority of fundamental rules. On the other

hand, no candid Whig will affirm that they were, till a later period, cleared from all ambiguity, or followed out to all their consequences."

If, therefore, moved by an instinct towards despotism, itself a great calamity and a great disqualification, when the nation was moving, though gently, in the opposite path, Charles had confined himself to the clearing up of these ambiguities, in the sense most favourable to his own views; or if he had even ventured to test still further the public inclinations towards, or endurance of, despotic rule, but with the honest determination to stop if he found he could not proceed with something like national contentment, history would not only have held him guiltless, but perhaps have made, with its usual indulgence to such men, a great merit, of his resigning that which he could not in fact obtain; and have honoured him as a patriot, because he could not prevent his people from making him put on the seeming of a patriotic king. But we shall see that the advice, the watchword of Strafford—*thorough*—was Charles's one idea of duty, wisdom, statesmanship, patriotism. To go right through with that which he had begun, was his unchangeable purpose at all times, and under all discouragements; and when royal influence, political arts, and at last armed forces did not avail to win the game in the broad, open, and comparatively honourable ways, he did not hesitate to descend into the secret, corrupting, and untruthful practices that kingcraft and statecraft had so persistently maintained as poisoned weapons in their armouries. Catholics and Protestants—English, Irish, and Scotch—Independents and Presbyterians, were all played off against each other; universal feuds and jealousies were excited; no single principle ever laid down by the King could be depended upon by those most interested, unless it formed an integral part of his own selfish policy, that of obtaining for the King the entire control of the mainsprings of government. Charles was not content to reign only: he and his heirs must govern also.

But as he miscalculated the temper of the time, so did he misunderstand the individual force of the men with whom he and his advisers would have to deal. Look at them—Eliot, Hollis, Coke, Pym, "King Pym," as he gradually began to be called, from the almost regal influence he exercised, John Hampden, Selden, Milton, Cromwell—what was Charles, what Strafford, what Laud, when confronted with such a race of giants as this?—men, whom it was the fate of the royal conspirators to call into political being for their own destruction, and for the salvation of English liberties.

Of course we cannot here attempt even the faintest outline of the actual course of events in that sublime struggle, one of ever-increasing interest among us; witness such recent books as M. Guizot's works on the subject; Mr. Carlyle's "Life of Cromwell," and Mr. Forster's newly-written chapter, relative to one of the most interesting and eventful incidents of the history—the arrest of the five members. But we may indicate the chief points around which the struggle revolved.



SIR EDWARD COKE.

They were precisely those which Lord Macaulay has shown were the very essentials of popular power and progress, the guarantees which had been wrested long centuries before from the Norman kings; namely, the parliamentary right to legislate, which now took the immediate form of a demand for the removal of a host of abuses that had grown up, more or less, recently; the parliamentary right to determine all taxation, and which now asserted itself, by refusing all supplies (or

taxation) until the other right of practical legislation was afforded, in the removal of grievances; and (growing out of these two) the power of the sword, which it was obvious might override all other matters of contention, by raising to irresistible authority that one of the two great principles now contending for mastery—freedom and despotism, as represented respectively by the Parliament and the Royalists—which was able firmly to hold it in its grasp.



P.Y.M.

Charles was crowned at Westminster in 1626, and we may see with what blind rapidity he hurried on the impending contest, when we observe some of the events that signalized that year, the second of his reign. The Parliament begins to inquire into, in order to redress, grievances, and are at once commanded by Charles not to question his servants. His favourite, Buckingham, is impeached; and the King retaliates by sending two popular members to the Tower—Sir John

Eliot and Sir Dudley Digges. Parliament declines to proceed with business till the members are freed, and Charles gives way. The Parliament delays the supplies, and the King dissolves the Parliament. Forced loans are now demanded and obtained, troops levied, ships armed, the clergy set to preach against Parliaments and for the loan, and popular members are again seized and imprisoned for refusing to contribute to such "loan." Eliot once more goes to the Tower, and with him are Hampden and Sir Thomas Wentworth, the latter as yet appearing to be a patriot. A busy year, and full of awful portents for the years to come.

Charles finds that he cannot get money enough, without the Parliament, to continue the war with France; that even his own judges refuse to sanction some of his modes of supplying the deficiencies of the royal treasury—as when he ordered duties to be levied on merchandise, which the judges declared illegal, so the dreaded assembly is again called together. They begin just where they left off—demanding redress of grievances; and now they think the time has come, after the experience of Charles's first two years of rule, for a new Magna Charta; they prepare the PETITION OF RIGHT, and they pray his assent to it.

What a lesson might not this have been, if the King's mind had been capable of receiving any unwelcome but timely truth! Two years had already brought him to the positions of King John, and of Henry III. The mighty precedents of their unsuccessful struggle were now practically coming home to him; and he must determine, as they had been obliged to determine, whether he would declare for open war or make ample submission; unless, indeed, he would even still further follow their example, and substitute for both these courses a third method—apparent submission in order to bide his time, and in order treacherously to undo, at a later period, all that had been done. And this course, the most fatal of all courses, was precisely the one Charles adopted. When he found, after an unsuccessful and most pitiful attempt at juggling the Commons into believing that he accepted the Petition of Right by an evasive acknowledgment of it, that he must clearly accept it or refuse it altogether, and take the consequences, he did accept. Solemnly, in the presence of the estates of the realm, on the 7th day of June, 1628, did Charles, in person, give the royal assent. We need not dwell on the terms of the Petition of Right; it was avowedly only a reaffirmation, in modern language, of the principles of Magna Charta, and of the famous statutes of Edward I., which declared, in



effect, there could be no taxation without the consent of Parliament. But it contained ample and weighty evidences of the immediate and pressing necessity for such reaffirmation, in the allusions to such facts as we have already narrated—those forced loans, and those imprisonments by mere royal order; which were, of course, in their very nature, fatally antagonistic alike to *Magna Charta*, and to the ideas of civil liberty that that instrument involved. Charles accepts the *Petition of Right*, the Commons immediately vote supplies; but they also proceed against the royal favourite, Buckingham, who has oppressed England at home, and disgraced her abroad; and they deal with the questions of tonnage or poundage (Custom-house duties) in a manner not at all satisfactory to Charles; so he suddenly prorogues the Parliament, in the very middle of their labours. If his object had been to show how little practical value must be attached to the enactment of the *Petition of Right*, he could not have taken a more effectual mode than this. And he followed it up by a second prorogation; by fresh outrages in the *Star Chamber*, and Court of High Commission; and by the most reckless levying of illegal taxation.

And now the whole course of procedure, for some years to come, may be likened to the moves of games of chess, played on each side by skilful players, with Europe for spectators, and the happiness, honour, and progress of England (and indirectly, through England, of much of the rest of the world) at issue, as the stakes. Let us glance rapidly at the more noticeable of these moves, or incidents, and mark how invariably each was met by its natural antagonist, until the combatants' blood grew more and more heated with the struggle, and more prepared for any—even the most desperate attempts.

Thus, when Buckingham and the question of the impeachment are removed out of the way of the Commons, by the tragic incident of the Duke's being stabbed by Felton, a political fanatic, and there is hope felt that the King may now get, with a new, also a better adviser, Charles sets at rest such speculations by taking into favour a man of all others, the most to be hated and dreaded by the Commons of England—the patriot Wentworth; one of their own body till very recently, but who has changed sides, become Baron Wentworth, and is now waiting and watching eagerly to show Charles how best to realize a "thorough" despotism, by the most thorough measures. On Buckingham's death, he, an infinitely abler, and infinitely more dangerous man, becomes Laud's coadjutor; and the King has thus two as good supporters and

advisers for religious and civil government respectively, as he could possibly desire—from his view of things.

Parliament re-assembles ; and one of its first moves is to inquire into the flagrant violations of the Petition of Right, that have already taken place ; and they also begin to take active measures of precaution against the similarly objectionable proceedings of Laud in the Church, who is fast carrying things back to a state of Popery, with the mere substitution



JOHN HAMPDEN.

of Lambeth Palace for the Vatican. Bold moves both ; but the King checks them at once by adjournment. Again, when the Commons meet, do they proceed, coolly, just where they left off, with the business of arresting Laud ; and, again, Charles, with equal decision, orders an instant adjournment. But the Commons grow restive under that kind of treatment ; they will not let the speaker leave the chair—not even though he actually weeps, in his distress of mind—until they have

passed resolutions guarding the nation against Laud on the one hand, and from illegal taxation on the other. They then adjourn themselves for a few days. The King is startled by these measures, but he meets both in a very unhesitating manner:—he first dissolves the Parliament, and then selects seven members for punishment; they are arrested, sent to the Tower, fined by the Star Chamber, and prevented (by a juggle worthy of the most acute pettifogger of our day) from taking the benefit



OLIVER CROMWELL.

of *habeas corpus*. But Charles has yet other means at hand for checking the growing insolence, as he esteems it, of Parliament. He finds judges in the Court of King's Bench pliant enough to fine three of the "vipers"—Eliot, Hollis, and Valentine—for their behaviour *in Parliament*.

Ah, if he could but keep off these Parliaments, how pleasant yet every thing might be! Well, at all events, he takes full swing of the enjoyment of their absence. Tonnage and poundage are illegally

collected; the Puritan Leighton is whipped; old feudal customs are revived, such, for instance, as levying arbitrary sums of money on the most arbitrary principles of selection, as regards the persons, from men of moderately small estates, to compound for their not taking up the costly charge of knighthood. It is supposed a hundred thousand pounds were thus obtained; and this, then a large sum, was all the sweeter, that it was taken, for the most part, if not exclusively, from the friends and supporters of Parliament. Many men objected, of course; but they found time to reconsider their objections in the peaceful calm of the jails to which they were promptly committed. Another shrewd discovery was, that the old royal forests had been seriously encroached upon in the lapse of ages; and accordingly the lands were at once resumed. Two cases may illustrate the honour and humanity of Charles and Strafford in this matter. The Earl of Southampton was reduced almost to sudden poverty, by a decision which deprived him of his estate adjoining the New Forest at Hampshire. The other case is that of Rockingham Forest, which was increased from six to sixty miles round, trespassers being punished by ruinous fines. By these, and kindred ways, Charles now sought to raise money, and to give effectual check to the notion of Parliament, that he must come to them for relief. The plan was sufficient for the moment; though it may be doubted whether Charles would have been quite so contented with it, if he had guessed the rate of interest he was to pay for the accommodation. Meantime everything goes to his mind. Laud revives the custom of consecrating churches, and does it so impressively, that Papists themselves might have looked on, as at Saint Catherine Cree, with envy of the ceremonial. Then, too, Eliot dies in the Tower; thus showing to all England in general, and to past and future Parliaments in particular, the fate of men who refuse to put their political trust in princes. Of course Charles remembers his advisers through all this, and shows his gratitude to them. Laud becomes Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord High Treasurer; whilst Wentworth, having been first made Lord President of the North, is next made Lord Deputy of Ireland; where, it is expected, he will bring all things into harmony with the state of affairs in this country, now so happily settled.

Of course, a noisy free press would be out of place in such a political paradise; that must be prevented at any cost; so Prynne, for publishing his "*Histrion Mastix*," is branded, has his ears cut off, his nose slit, and is fined £10,000; the last part of the sentence being

merely an amiable way of breaking to the unhappy prisoner the fact, that he must make up his mind to be always a prisoner, or, at least, until he has satisfied the views of those whom he has so grievously offended. Laud is now made licenser-general of all printed books; he alone is to determine what is good, and what is not good for the soul of England. Could there be a better arrangement?

Unhappily, money is still a difficulty to Charles. But no matter; that, as he has already discovered, is merely a case for ingenuity, now that there are no pestilent Parliaments to interfere. A bright thought occurs to one of the King's council. Maritime, and occasionally inland places, had, in old times, furnished ships to the crown; under what conditions, or what different combination of circumstances from any that now prevailed, no one could very accurately tell, or cared very earnestly to inquire. It was evidently a simple and a capital idea, and was at once acted on. Under the pretext (which makes one's cheek burn to think of, as the act of English gentlemen and noblemen) of taking special measures of protection for the English merchant service against Turkish and other pirates, and robbers, writs were issued to various places, and among these to the City of London; which was ordered to furnish no less than seven ships of war, with 1500 men, at the least, all properly supplied with arms, provisions, and stores, and having means to defray the men's wages, etc., for six months. When the first blow had been thus struck, by the issue of the edict, and the Common Council of London had been compelled into obedience, and had thus given an example to the rest of the country, *money was asked for instead of ships*—£3200 for every ship; and the local magistrates were empowered to make an assessment on the inhabitants. This was the beginning of the famous ship-money question; upon which England grew unaccountably excitable, and reluctant to obey, and here and there broke out into open refusal about; many men were even hardy enough to bring actions against those who had forcibly collected the odious impost. The judges were now consulted, and their answer was that the King might levy it. Come, there then was an end of the question at last, thought, no doubt, many an impatient royalist. It so happened that it was only the beginning. John Hampden, a gentleman of Buckinghamshire, refused to pay it. That might have been a trifling matter and easily settled, but for another immediate consequence, thirty other freeholders in Hampden's neighbourhood, stimulated by his example, refused also. Then, indeed, it was necessary to do something signal.

Hampden was proceeded against in the Court of Exchequer; all the judges were present; the affair proceeded, but seemed to become more difficult of solution as it went on; to Charles's disgust and astonishment three terms passed away before a decision; and when at last the verdict was given against Hampden, two of the judges resolutely broke away from their brethren in order to obey their consciences. This, then, was one of the victories that go a long way to ruin the victor. Strafford saw the true policy, but was alone in his courage. To be *thorough*, was what was wanted—to have no hesitation, no looking back. *Whip Hampden!* that was his advice, incredible as it may sound to those who are unfamiliar with the historical details of the period. Charles was not quite prepared, possibly, for so serious a measure; but Wentworth not only thought and said this once, but enforced his views on a second occasion in his letters, where he used the words, "In truth, I still wish Mr. Hampden, and others to his likeness, were well whipped into their right senses. And if the rod be so used that it smart not, I am the more sorry." Such was Charles's chief political adviser!

But if Hampden was not whipped, Lilburne had been, and for about as great a crime—his patriotism in asserting the rights of a free press, and in publishing his "News from Ipswich," which expressed opinions offensive to Laud and the Government; for this he was pilloried, *whipped all through the streets of London*, fined, and imprisoned. Truly, England was becoming a horrible place to those who did not choose to stand on the side which, for the present, seemed to be the winning one. So horrible, indeed, that some of the bravest of Englishmen lost heart at that moment, lost faith in their country's destinies, and prepared to follow those earlier pilgrim-fathers who had already found an asylum in America, and were building up on that virgin soil the free institutions which they despaired of at home. It is even said, and with sufficient likelihood to prevent historians from altogether rejecting the statement, that Hampden, Haselrig, and *Cromwell*, not only determined to emigrate, but were actually on board ship, when an embargo was issued by the Government, in the form of a royal proclamation, forbidding any more departures; and that their ship was one of eight vessels which were thus arrested, in the very act of sailing. Can one even venture to think of the possible consequences to England—can one at all realize the amount of the *difference* to English history, if Hampden and Cromwell had really left England behind them, to the tender

mercies of Charles, to become, then, in all probability, the conqueror in the field, and thenceforward the absolute despot on the throne?

Meantime, and as if to show, before the reappearance of the Parliament on the scene, the thorough breakdown of the king's policy, by its own inherent weight and disorganizing, not to say criminal, tendency, fresh difficulties were hourly starting up. Laud's new Book of Common Prayer, when sent into Scotland, produced a riot; and the riot merged into an insurrection; and that again into a grand armed League and Covenant, before which Charles and Laud were compelled to pause, nay, to go back. But, as ever with Charles, with whom insincerity was the first law, going back meant only, first, to put the prey off its guard; and, secondly, to prepare for a more effectual spring. He must try what force will do in Scotland. Successful there, he may return in arms to England, and,—perhaps Charles did not care just yet to go further in thought. But he acted. In 1639 we find him writing to the nobility and gentry to raise troops and meet him at York. The Queen, a Catholic, at the same time invited the Catholics to aid. Let the reader think of that one fact, and of all that it involved, for England and the English faith at such a period, and he will understand the thought that was fast permeating the national mind of the utter hopelessness of any compromise with such a King, who seemed in his secret heart determined to reverse the march of progress; and, alike in civil and religious government, take England back to the darkest of the dark ages. The armed Covenanters and the armed Royalists meet: but somehow Charles's purpose melts away as he approaches nearer and sees better the sort of antagonist that he must conquer in the battle-field, and as he perceives that his own followers are evidently disinclined to attack the Scotch. What if he were to fail? What, then, of his reception at home? What about the future Parliament, if he should have to meet one, after such a failure? Charles again yielded, in order to try again for conquest at another time.

And now, after an interregnum of eleven years, Charles does at last summon a new Parliament. Wentworth has got so much money out of Ireland by his capital management of the Parliament of that country, that it is no wonder he thinks he can now, by returning to England, show his royal master how to achieve corresponding results with the richer kingdom. Charles's mind misgave him; but Laud, Wentworth, and others promised him help by "extraordinary ways," if the new Parliament proved as "untoward" as the old ones, and so he consented.

The very first petition presented to that new House of Commons was one against ship-money, monopolies, the Star Chamber, and other grievances. The House began to make its inquiries. It also prepared to go into the case of their own former colleague—Eliot—who had died, as we have said, in the Tower, a martyr to their cause. In fact, the members were just pursuing the old course, and showing the old determination—that of asserting the rights of civil liberty, and punishing its assailants; when Charles, unable to control his anger, sent for both Houses collectively to Whitehall; and there stood and listened while the Lord Keeper told the members they must give supplies to begin with, and then the King would lend a gracious ear to grievances. Recall, but for a moment, the history of the reign up to this time, and then think of the cool audacity of such a proposition. "Yield your only weapon, and see how kindly I, your mortal enemy, will behave to you;" said, in effect, the King. The Lords are convinced by it, however; and vote that it shall be as the King wishes. The Commons instantly denounce that vote as a breach of privilege. The Lords wish to confer; the Commons decline:—there can be no talk, no compromise on such a matter. The King urges the supplies; he even promises he will give up ship-money if supplies are granted—as though such a promise was of the slightest value now; if even he thought proper to keep it it would only be because he could find another equally arbitrary mode, to match the many modes he had already put in force at various times, to raise funds illegally. The Commons promise to consider all he says; and pursue their deliberations in their own alarmingly quiet way, which promises to be also a "thorough" one on their side. Charles can bear no more: evidently the supplies will not precede grievances; so again, and for the last time, he dissolves a Parliament. The next Parliament will, in a more terrible sense, dissolve him.

Despotism has now grown monotonous in its routine; more arrests of offending members, more pecuniary exactions by ship-money, and other kindred agencies, follow hard upon the dissolution of this short Parliament. But events are thickening fast. The Scotch are now determined to enter England, in armed array, and compel Charles to submission. He hurries to meet them; but his officer, Lord Conway, is beaten, after a miserably-managed combat; in fact, the English have no mind to the business. The royal forces retreat—are pursued by the Scotch, and the excitement and danger are hourly increasing; so Charles reopens negotiations; and, although the terms offered to him



are harsh, he is compelled to listen, to temporize, for now matters are also threatening in England. "Parliament!" and "Redress of Grievances!" are cries that grow hourly more loud and fierce in the King's ear. Twelve peers become the spokesmen of the universal feeling; London petitions, in spite of Laud, who vainly tries to intimidate the people, and ten thousand names are there signed to the document. Lastly, the very people about the King, the Yorkshiresmen, who were in a measure supporting him, added their voices to the common demand—Parliament! Charles saw there was no alternative; the beginning of the end had now indeed come; the Parliament that he summoned was the one ever after to be memorable as the Long Parliament.

It was in this assembly that a man began to be noticed who had previously attracted little attention from the royalist party. It is to one of their number we are indebted for the following picture:—"I came," says the narrator, Sir Philip Warwick, "into the house one morning, well clad; and perceived a gentleman speaking, whom I knew not, very ordinarily appalled, for it was a plain cloth suit, which seemed to have been made by an ill country tailor; his linen was plain and not very clean; and I remember a speck or two of blood upon his little band, which was not much larger than his collar. His hat was without a hat-band. His stature was of good size; his sword stuck close to his side; his countenance swollen and reddish; his voice sharp and untunable, and his eloquence full of fervour," etc. That is our first tangible, personal glimpse in history of Oliver Cromwell. The object of his speech was to defend a servant of Mr. Prynne's, who was charged with having dispersed "libels."

At last then, Charles, Laud, and Strafford were once more compelled to face the outraged majesty of the people of England; and had no longer, unhappily for them, the old resorts to flee to—no more adjournments, no more dissolutions were practicable; their own weapons had somehow broken in their hands. The inquiry into grievances, and the inquisition for innocent blood, began almost simultaneously. Prynne, Burton, and Bastwick are brought back in honour to London, and Strafford is impeached, and is sent to the Tower. Laud is also impeached and made prisoner; the Bishop of Ely is ordered to give security that he will answer to judgment of Parliament; six judges of the land are similarly dealt with for their iniquitous decision as to ship-money; one of them is even arrested on the bench. So the storm rolls on, and Charles is powerless to arrest it. Strafford is tried; Pym clinging to him with

inexorable purpose, and trumpetting forth to the world the black account of the misdeeds of the fallen minister; he is found guilty, sentenced, and at the last moment is, in effect, deserted by his royal master, and so goes to the scaffold.

The Commons will grant supplies now. The days of semblance of reformation have passed, and those of reality come. They are not trusting to promises; they have obtained, and are obtaining, per-



JOHN MILTON.

formance. So Charles gets the supplies. But at the same time he sees the Star Chamber abolished; also his High Commission Court. He sees more bishops impeached. He withdraws to Scotland. He is obviously scheming how to turn one country against the other. Presently Ireland contributes more than its share to the general excitement and alarm. A terrible massacre of Protestants takes place; the number of the victims varying, with different authorities, from twelve

thousand to upwards of one hundred and fifty-four thousand persons. And, worst of all, Charles and his Catholic Queen are supposed to be not very remotely connected, through their secret intrigues, with the causes of, or with the influences that led to, the calamity. When the King returns to London, he finds the Parliament showing its fears and jealousies, by guarding themselves during their deliberations. He, on his side, gives them increased cause for suspicion, by dismissing the Lieutenant of the Tower, and replacing him by Colonel Lunsford, a mere tool. What does Charles meditate? What new victims is that Tower to receive? The answer is soon given. Charles accuses six members of Parliament of treason—Lord Kimbolton (a peer), Hollis, Hazelrig, Pym, Hampden, and Strode; and he demands the last five from the Commons. The accused members appear in their places; but the House is secretly warned that a great act of treachery is meditated; that, in fact, Charles is coming suddenly, with a band of armed men, to arrest the five by force; the members are compelled by the House to withdraw; the King is seen, as the doors are cast wide open, with hundreds of armed men at his back; and had not the five gone before this moment, the bloodiest tragedy that ever stained the annals of English history, would probably have taken place. The members were armed, and would—there can scarcely be a doubt of it—have resisted to the death the King's followers. It is one of the romances of history—the explanation of the act that prevented all this bloodshed by timely warning. Lady Carlisle had been tenderly attached to Lord Strafford, and was so sickened by the treatment he received at the last crisis of his fate from the King, whom he had served so unhesitatingly, that she seems, after her lover's death, to have burned to revenge him, even by friendly communication with Pym, the man who had pursued Strafford so unrelentingly. But Pym was an honourable and open antagonist, however terrible; and she may have felt only the greater respect for him, through the reaction and violence of her feelings with regard to Charles. She it was, at all events, that conveyed secretly, through Pym, the all-important intelligence of the King's plan. Colonel Lunsford's intended services at the Tower were now plain enough. But when Charles entered the House the birds had flown, to use his own expression. But while the blow he meditated had failed, the intention to strike the blow was made perfectly clear; and it removed the last scruples. From that time, men of the most moderate—equally with those of the most determined—character, such as Hampden, for in-

stance, in the one body, and Cromwell in the other, saw there was no issue left, but force. From that time, indeed, both sides prepared for war; however, for decency's sake, or to leave open the possibilities of reconciliation, they veiled, with more or less of care, their proceedings.

The rest of the sad, but sublime story, we need not dwell upon. Tremendous now was the hurry of events, after that eventful 4th of



ANDREW MARVELL.

January, 1642. Within four months of that day, two distinct and rival governments claim and exercise power; in July, the Earl of Essex is appointed general of the army of Parliament; in August (on the 25th), Charles formally raises the royal standard at Nottingham; in October, the first battle—Edgehill—is fought, and four thousand men in fratricidal contest fall to the dust, with no very great military advantage to either side. Oxford becomes the King's headquarters, and is regularly

fortified. On the 18th of June in the following year, 1643, another and smaller battle is fought, but one of sadder consequence, Hampden is mortally wounded at Chalgrove, and dies a few days after. The Parliament troops are defeated at Atherton Moor, but are successful at Grantham; where a man begins to emerge from the comparative obscurity of amateur military science—by name Oliver Cromwell. On the whole, as yet, the Royalists gain ground. They take Gainsborough, Lincoln, and Bristol. Another battle is fought on the 20th of September, at Newbury; and there Charles experiences as great a loss, in the person of the truly noble Lord Falkland, as the people had previously suffered in the loss of Hampden: while these two men lived, it was just possible terms of accommodation might have been devised, both were so reasonable, and so true. Their early removal seems like a foreshadowing of destiny, that the bloody arbitrement of war was now to be wrought out to its fatallest conclusions.

Milton is now in the field, in another sense, wielding a pen scarcely less formidable than would ultimately be the great Protector's sword. He began, in 1641, by his work against the Established Church, entitled "On Reformation;" other works followed, especially "The Reason of Church Government against Prelacy;" and most important of all his writings at this stage of affairs, was his noble "Areopagitica: a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing."

The English and Scotch parliaments and armies soon made common cause. In July (the 2nd), 1644, Cromwell is again heard of, by the victory (chiefly owing to him) of Marston Moor. Men's eyes look now yearningly towards him, as one who will bring the contest to a speedy conclusion, if he can but get the chance. Naseby Field follows shortly, and Charles in person receives an utterly ruinous defeat at the hands of Fairfax and Cromwell, who is second in command. In April, 1647, Charles seeks protection from the Scottish army, is given up to the English army, is kept a prisoner for some time, buoying himself up all the while with hopes of yet succeeding to his former power, by practising upon the jealousies of the different bodies of his enemies; is finally brought to London, and there placed at last at the bar of national justice, on the 19th of January, 1649, in Westminster Hall; is condemned on the 27th, and beheaded on the 30th; Bradshaw sitting as his judge. There wanted but one condition to make this trial as just, as it was in other respects awful and salutary—the consent, or rather the initiative, of the whole people of England, as represented by the

bulk of its members in Parliament; and that was precisely the condition that was wanting. The House of Commons had been forcibly divided into two bodies—the Independents and Presbyterians—and the latter driven away, while the former, under the shelter of Cromwell and the army, had ordered the trial. Although this fact cannot be denied, and ought not to be overlooked, it must also be remembered that what we know of the men who instituted or carried on the trial,



LORD WILLIAM RUSSELL.

shows that they did nought in hate but all in honour; and that years afterwards, when some of the judges were brought in their turn to the scaffold, they died glorifying with their last breath the act for which they suffered. And that act, immediately after its performance, was grandly defended before the whole world, by one of the greatest and purest of men, John Milton. Putting aside, then, the mode in which

the trial and death of Charles was accomplished (and no other was then possible), there can be no manner of question now as to the broad issue that was tried. Was he a traitor to the people of England? We must answer that as his judges answered it—he was, and deserved death, as much as any traitor possibly could who had ever suffered under the operation of law.

Of course there was, could be, no law applying to such a case. Statutes against treason had been instituted by monarchs, to defend themselves. What then? Charles had struck treasonably at the rights of the people and Parliament; both people and Parliament had grappled with, and overthrown him. Was he now to escape punishment? Was he to be permitted fresh opportunities of wrapping England in the flames of civil war, with its obvious possibilities, the loss of all that had been achieved, and the ruin and judicial slaughter of the patriotic actors? Were future would-be imitators of Charles to be instructed, by his life, that their worst failures would be followed by impunity? Charles himself urged that he was only responsible to God; but Bradshaw, the judge, answered him, that “seeing God had, by his providence, overruled the plea, the Court was determined to do so likewise.” Posterity must respect, even if it hesitates to sanction, the decision.

And the dread of that penalty has never since been, never will be, forgotten; and the principles that were struggled for through all this wonderful contest, were triumphant at last. Not in Cromwell’s time as Protector: for great, and wise, and magnanimous as he was, he could not overcome the difficulties of his position; he could make England glorious abroad and peaceable at home, but he could not settle the bases of civil liberty; could not even so fix the government as to prevent the restoration of Charles II. after his death. Not under that restoration, either, were the principles of the revolution triumphant; on the contrary, in spite of the wit, and courage, and political purity of an Andrew Marvell, there seemed to be a relapse into every kind of social, political, and religious disunion and corruption, and men were driven to dream of a restoration as against the restoration. And there were plots and victims, and among these, some of the most illustrious names in history; Algernon Sidney, who avowedly died for the good old cause of the Commonwealth men; and Lord William Russell, who sought only constitutional government such as we now enjoy, and who died under the executioner’s hands, in

payment of the penalty exacted by the second Charles for all such patriotic aspirations, wherever he could establish a colourable pretence of overt act against those who were inspired by them.

Still less could men look to Charles's brother and successor, James II., for the triumph of the principles that Pym and Hampden, and Milton and Cromwell, had struggled for; and yet it was precisely to him in a certain sense that their immediate establishment was due. It was his ostentatious tyranny that brought matters to a climax, and



WILLIAM THE THIRD.

compelled the entire nation to interfere, and change the dynasty, by sending for the Prince of Orange, a Protestant and constitutionalist. With his arrival, the terrible gates of revolution—revolution, we mean, in the hope and need of civil liberty—that Charles I. had opened, were now again closed: and happily for ever.



## CHAPTER VI.

### SETTLEMENT OF THE EXISTING CONSTITUTION.

AMONG the eminent Englishmen who were said to have acted in entire but secret unison with the Prince of Orange, during the last few months of the reign of the second James, was the great lawyer, Lord Somers. The success of the movement, as shown by the flight of James and the arrival of William, brought, of course, all the more important friends of the latter prominently before the public. Thus, when William and Mary were accepted as the King and Queen of England, Lord Somers was nominated a member of the committee that was appointed to put together the essential parts of the future constitution, having before it these express objects—the security of the Protestant religion, and of the laws and liberties of the country. An elaborate report was prepared, and submitted by the first—to a second—committee, of which Somers was chairman; and it was that document which formed the basis of the Declaration of Rights, which was agreed to by King, Queen, and the two Houses of Parliament, and subsequently confirmed by a solemn statute—the Bill of Rights—which thenceforward became a new kind of Magna Charta. To whom, individually, belongs the honour of framing this grand instrument, will probably never be known now with any exactitude; but Lord Somers is popularly supposed to have been the man, and there can be little doubt but that the supposition is correct; for, in addition to the facts we have previously narrated, let it be remembered that he had all the industry, the fixed constitutional principle, and the clear insight into the wants and possibilities of the time that were requisite at so serious an epoch. We are then, we believe, only doing fitting honour to the memory of the chief author of the Act of Settlement, in connecting with it the name of Lord Somers.

And what is it that we find in this famous document from which all men now consent to date the establishment of the constitution—this Bill of Rights? Let us see, premising that it begins by reciting in

full the Declaration we have previously spoken of, so that both documents are substantially one.

The arbitrary and illegal acts of the late King are enumerated as the ground-work of all that follows, and then the assembled Lords and Commons, vindicating, "as their ancestors in like cases have usually done," their ancient rights and liberties, declare—

That the pretended power of suspending of laws, or the execution of laws by regal authority, without the consent of Parliament, is illegal;

That the pretended power of dispensing with laws, or the execution of laws, by regal authority, as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal;

That the commission for erecting the late Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes, and all other commissions and courts of like nature, are illegal and pernicious;

That the levying money for or to the use of the Crown by pretence of prerogative without grant of Parliament, for longer time or in other manner than the same is or shall be granted, is illegal;

That it is the right of the subject to petition the King, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal;

That the raising or keeping a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with consent of Parliament, is against law;

That the subjects which are Protestant may have arms for their defence suitable to their condition, and as allowed by law;

That elections of members of Parliament ought to be free;

That the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament;

That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted;

That juries ought to be duly empannelled and returned, and jurors which pass upon men in trials for high treason ought to be freeholders;

That all grants and promises of fines and forfeitures of particular persons before conviction, are illegal and void;

That for the redress of all grievances, and for the amending, strengthening, and preserving of the laws, Parliaments ought to be held frequently;

*And they do claim, demand, and insist upon all and singular the premises as their undoubted rights and liberties.*

So much for the security of the civil liberties of England. Let us now see what were the arrangements regarding the succession to the throne—a question always intimately connected with the rights of the people and of Parliament, and never more so than now, when the new arrangements were connected with a new king, leaving the old ones to their natural supporter, the previous and still living monarch. The crown, then, was, by the Bill of Rights, settled first upon William and Mary; after their death, upon the bodily heirs of Mary; then, in default of such issue, upon the Princess Anne of Denmark (subsequently Queen Anne) and her bodily heirs; and lastly, if she had no children, then upon the heirs of the body of King William. But a few years later (in 1700) a second Act was passed, by which the succession after Anne was limited to the Princess Sophia, Electress of Hanover (granddaughter of James I.), and the heirs of her body, being Protestants. It is by this law that the existing royal family of England enjoy the crown.

Annexed to the arrangements for the succession were certain conditions, two of which are still noteworthy. The actual sovereign must join in communion with the Established Church. No pardon under the great seal of England can be pleaded to an impeachment by the Commons in Parliament.

Reading this Bill of Rights, and then looking round at our present political condition, we cannot but see how thoroughly successful our patriots have been at last. But the gain, for the time, was rather one to be thought of for future results, than for any immediate and large benefit to the people. All these great charters, and petitions of right, and declarations, were after all but organic instruments of good government, not good government itself. We could not go on without them, but when we did at last get them, neither monarchs nor statesmen, nor even Parliament itself, showed any great desire to use them to achieve a true advance.

Court intrigues; great wars with the French; incessant tamperings with, in order to corrupt, Parliament; extension of the boundaries of empire; and the growth of parties—Whigs and Tories—having too often merely party objects in view;—these and similar matters were what chiefly occupied attention for the next century, and so distracted the public thoughts from what should be the foremost aim

of national and of individual life—internal progress and culture. And when a great change and new movement did begin, it was apparently in order to undo rather than to secure for us the very guarantees we had obtained.

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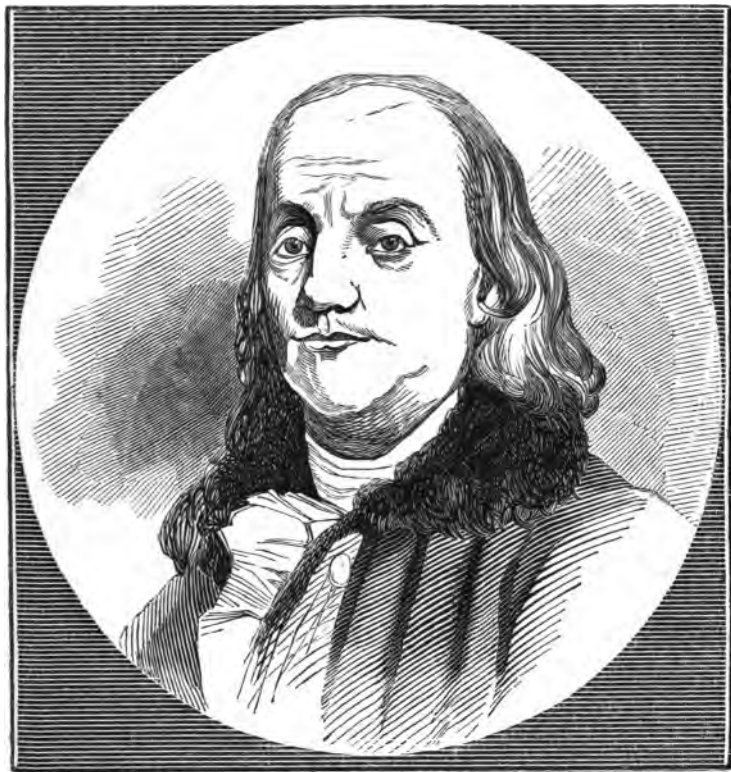
## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CHIEF GUARANTEES OF ENGLISH CIVIL LIBERTY.

APART from the one grand paramount idea—Parliament—which contains, and ever must contain within itself, all possible securities for individual and national liberty that the advancement of knowledge and civilization shall show to be desirable,—apart, though not to be dissociated from this all-potent tribunal,—are to be recognized certain vital and fundamental laws, without which all other political conditions are more or less nugatory. Taxation and representation must, for instance, go together; and taxation means (as, we believe, will be ultimately acknowledged by every one, though it is not so yet) subjection not to taxes only, but to all the legal exactions of government; for if it be slavery to pay pecuniary demands that you have had no hand through a parliamentary representative, in agreeing ought to be made, surely it is still greater slavery to submit to laws affecting your health, character, personal security, domestic relations, life, religion; and in the making of which laws you have had no sort of voice or consultation.

This, then, is one of the guarantees—taxation coincident with representation. Yet we see, in the attempt of Government arbitrarily to tax our colonies abroad, how little they had learnt from the unsuccessful attempts of the Stuart kings to tax our people at home. Our American brethren were moving on in the peaceful tenor of their usual way, when suddenly they were astounded by hearing that they were to be taxed by an English Parliament; in other words, that the Grenville Stamp Act had passed. Benjamin Franklin was then in England, acting as agent for some of the American States. He denounced it at once as arbitrary and illegal. He appealed earnestly to the Government and to the most influential men, but was treated

with personal indignity. Of course, when men have made up their minds to do an arbitrary act, they don't like to be told the naked ugly truth; and so, Franklin, finding he could do no good here, hurried back to America. He was immediately elected to a Congress of Delegates, which had been formed at his advice, and which had drawn up a Declaration of Rights. Then came the tea riot at Boston, then the first bloodshed at Lexington in the defeat of the British regulars



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

by the American volunteers, then the greater battle and greater defeat of the British troops on Bunker's Hill, followed by the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776, and the protracted war.

Then—too late—the British Government was willing to treat, and resign all its pretensions, if only the idea of American independence were abandoned. Lord Howe met Franklin and other commissioners to try if they could agree, but both parties found that the one point

alone on which they were restricted, was that very one of independence, so the negotiations broke off. Franklin was then sent by Congress to Paris. He was there so well received, and he there so well played his part, that a treaty of alliance was at last concluded, though not until the Americans had wonderfully strengthened their ambassadors by news of the capitulation of Burgoyne's entire army of several thousand men to the revolutionary forces.

England struggled on a while, but uselessly. She had no moral strength in the contest, and her material strength could not be displayed at so great a distance from her own shores, in successful opposition to an entire people, possessing the same blood, knowledge, arms, and sense of national and patriotic life. In 1783 George III. was enforced to give his consent to a treaty of peace; and, more humiliating still to many of the English statesmen of the day, Franklin signed the document on the 3rd of September.

It might have been reasonably supposed that now, at last, was ended that critical experiment which began in the attempt of the Grenville ministry to tax those by the British Parliament who were not represented in the British Parliament, and which, as we have said, was only a new manifestation of the old spirit, as shown in the endeavour of the king to tax his subjects without their consent. But when once the ball of political agitation is set going, no one can say when or where it will stop. It was a very little ball apparently at the outset, but it swelled amazingly as it rolled; and when it had at last reached its utmost size, and knocked against the British empire, and shattered it so, that all the American colonies were lost for ever by the collision; and when for a moment it did there seem to rest, it was but for a moment only, and the world next heard of it in the tremendous upheavings of the French Revolution, which were obviously and naturally brought on by the national excitement during the American War, and by the success of France and America in humiliating the arms of England. Ideas of freedom were now scattered broadcast over France, and presently it was discovered that that unhappy land had troubles of its own, in the state of the bulk of the population, far worse than any that La Fayette had crossed the Atlantic to remove. And so began that most terrible of all revolutions; peaceable at first, and full of promise, but changing, as it went on under the sad circumstances and conditions of the time, into a chaotic scene of blood and violence, and wild and feverish aspirations, that gladdened its enemies

and grieved its friends, through the whole civilized world. At first in England men of all ranks welcomed the new movement, and shared in much of its hopes. But as it gave way to excesses, so the feeling towards it changed; until after a little time, by a common enough reaction, the idea of liberty itself became connected with that miserable and bloody travesty of it which France exhibited, in the minds of the governing classes of England; and from that moment everything was done, even to the extent of falsehood and slander, to turn the hearts of the people of England against the people of France, and against everything that breathed of liberal aspiration. Then it was that one of England's great men, Edmund Burke, was tried, and found wanting. He had become the leader of the Whig party, by his political and literary genius, and up to the time of the French Revolution was generally to be found struggling in the cause of the people as a Reformer. And to him we were indebted, in 1782, for that great bill of economical reform by which he signalized his possession of office as paymaster of the forces. But the very instant the French Revolution broke out, his mind changed. It is all-important to notice that he did *not* wait for the crimes of the French Revolution to make him turn against it; he was against it even from the period of the first assemblage of the States General. Of course when the revolution had committed itself by its crimes, he not only felt justified, but pursued it more relentlessly, and with greater success. His famous book, the "Reflections," had an immense effect in creating, first, the hostile feeling against France, which, subsequently, hurried us into unjust warfare, and brought on the Nemesis of a mighty National Debt (and Burke himself aided this effect in every possible way, by directly urging war against the principles and practices of Jacobinism); and, secondly, by creating a habitual dislike through English society to everything that savoured of liberalism, or independent political thought.

It was very different with another man, his contemporary, friend, and disciple, who was, like Burke, a Whig, nay, who had drawn from Burke's own mind and career much of the chief nourishment that made Fox what he was, an ardent, able, eloquent, and honest statesman, whose principles were, peace abroad, conciliation at home, progress in civil and religious liberty. The unjust war with America roused all his patriotic feelings, energy, and genius in favour of the oppressed provinces. He pursued his way constantly and conscientiously in opposition to the narrow, bigoted policy of George III., and was

honoured, therefore, by that monarch's most inveterate personal hostility. His Libel Bill placed him among the foremost of constitutional legislators. His India Bill, though unsuccessful, showed the high statesman-like order of his mind. And when the French Revolution broke out, and went on, now well, now ill, but always including the welfare of a mighty nation, Fox supported it when he thought it right, blamed it, or more than blamed it, when he saw it wrong or



C. J. FOX.

criminal. But he would not do what Burke wished, plunge this country into war to put down the principles of the French Revolution, many of which were admirable in themselves ; neither would he resign all hope of France, or consider her beyond the pale of nations, because she was passing through a terrible period of transition, and not doing it altogether in the wisest way. So he and Burke quarrelled ; and we know nothing in the personal history of our public men more touching



than this rupture. But it was inevitable, Burke's views being what they then were. The Government was bent upon rolling back the march of progress at home by a war with France, and its domestic policy was actuated by the one idea—destroy or discredit every man or every thing that opposed such a war. All who doubted its wisdom “were regarded by Mr. Pitt's government,” says Miss Martineau, in her “History of the Peace,” “as seditious persons; and suspected sedition was hunted down with a ferocity to the last degree unwise in such times. Clergymen and other educated men in Scotland were doomed to transportation for speeches and acts of political license, such as always grows under persecution; and attempts were made to bring others to the gibbet in England for constructive treason; attempts which, if not baffled by the sense and courage of the juries, would have been ground enough, in such a crisis, for such a revolution in England as would secure to men their constitutional rights. There was a suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*, a stringent Alien Bill, and, finally, in 1796, the Seditious Meetings Bill, which was so oppressive and unconstitutional that Mr. Fox and the leaders of the opposition seceded from the House of Commons when the bill was committed.”

So that already the old war between King and Parliament, as representative of the people, had changed to a new war between the Parliament, as a tool of the King, and of the wealthier and more aristocratic class on the one side, and of the people on the other; though, happily, it is of the very nature of *Parliaments* that there must be always some men there able and willing to *speaking their mind* in favour of the people; and out of that speaking, if it can but be steadily maintained, will certainly at last grow action, legislation, justice, liberty. But there are times when silence, and even withdrawal from the right of speaking, are more alarming to the despots of government than the freest license of the tongue. Queen Mary, as we have seen, could not patiently stand such a course. Similar cases have repeatedly occurred in our own days, since the last revolution of 1848. Probably Pitt was seriously affected by Fox's secession from Parliament, but did not care to let it be shown, or to pause in the imposing march of national affairs to consider ulterior consequences.

After Pitt's death Fox returned to politics and to the ministry, but he also died (in 1808) before he could achieve his great object, peace with France; but, during his last moments, how grateful must have been the reflection to him that he had kept alive the smouldering

sparks of liberty, when they might otherwise have been completely trampled out.

In passing away, at last, from this great and seductive theme, with which all our political progress is so intimately connected, the right of taxation, one cannot but earnestly wish all readers of these pages to note how every principle that has been contended for, how all the bloodshed that has happened, how all the costly experiments that have been made, extending through so many centuries, are now once more at stake by the recent decision of the House of Lords, that they have the right to suspend the removal of a tax that the House of Commons has abolished. If that be so, of course henceforward the House of Lords must, for decency's sake, go into the whole subject, examine all estimates; do, in fact, just what the Commons do before deciding—have brought before it all the materials of a safe and comprehensive judgment. *Which means : Let the Lords quietly undo all the nation has done.* The entire *spirit* of our political history shows that the people are to tax themselves by the means of their representatives in the Commons, and that such right is the corner-stone of the whole constitutional structure; pull that out or loosen it, and sooner or later we shall have the whole building down about our ears, and have everything to begin anew. Our countrymen must take care we don't have to embark on any such perilous sea; the error made must be remedied at once, and doubtless it will be.

Passing on now to another of the great guarantees we have referred to, let us say a few words upon the writ of *habeas corpus*. In its chief and political meaning (for it has also a legal and technical meaning that does not now concern us), the writ of *habeas corpus* is that which is issued by a judge or a court when a case of illegal confinement is alleged. By this writ it is ordered that the body of the prisoner be produced by him who detains it, that the date and cause of the capture and detention be stated, and that the parties concerned submit to the award of the court. This simple yet admirable provision was wrung from Charles I., after he had shown how great was the necessity for some such safeguard; but it was so tampered with or evaded by him, and by his son, Charles II., that, in the thirty-first year of the latter's reign, the existing Act was passed, which has proved perfectly sufficient for the object sought; too sufficient, indeed, to please such Governments as those of Mr. Pitt and of Lord Sidmouth, and so they hit upon the practice of suspending it in all times of alleged

danger, though, of course, those were the precise periods during which alone it could be of any serious value. It is the beauty of this law that it shelters only the innocent; for if they who avail themselves of it are guilty, or even under suspicion of legal guilt, the only effect of the writ of *habeas corpus* is to insure that they shall be legally dealt with; it sets free those only against whom there is no case, and whose very arrest was an outrage.

In connection with this subject we may fitly notice press-warrants and general-warrants. The practice of impressment no longer exists, though we believe the legal right to impress seamen is still maintained; but during the course of the last century nothing was more common than for poor fellows (just arrived, perhaps, from a long foreign voyage in a merchant ship) to be suddenly seized by a press-gang, acting under a press-warrant. If the victims resisted they were knocked down, brutally punished, and often carried in a half-senseless state on board some royal ship. The novels of the time are full of illustrations of this monstrous and cruel custom. John Wilkes, while acting as an alderman of London, made an ineffectual attempt to resist their introduction into the City, stating his opinion that press-warrants were far worse and more illegal than general-warrants, those instruments of arbitrary power on which he had roused all England, and kept it for years in an almost perilous state of excitement.

In a certain number of a periodical called the *North Briton*, Wilkes accused the King of uttering a falsehood in the speech he had made while proroguing Parliament. Now, either the offence was bad enough to come fairly under the operation of the ordinary laws, and might thus be punished; or it was one of those liberties of the press which approach license, and which, however annoying and inexcusable, cannot be otherwise punished than by the reprobation of public opinion; or, lastly, the statement was true, and the worst offender was his Majesty, who had set so bad an example to his people. But the King's ministers seem to have thought the mere statement was a crime so great as to place Wilkes altogether beyond the protection of law, and to have left him to their and the royal pleasure to do as they might please with; so out of that inexhaustible armoury, legal precedent, they found a weapon called *general-warrant* wherewith to attack Wilkes in a mode he little expected. We may here transcribe an interesting document, with which we have been favoured by a correspondent, in illustration of the nature of these general-warrants. It is

a copy of a warrant that was originally issued by Judge Jeffreys, of infamous memory; and this copy was sent to Wilkes himself, after he had become conspicuous by his contest with the Government.

COPY OF THE WARRANT.

"Angl: Sf. - - Whereas I am informed that there are divers ill-disposed persons who write, print, and publish, Treasonable, Popish, Seditious, and Scandalous Books, Pamphletts, and Pictures, endeavouring thereby to disturb the minds of his Majesties Subjects, and the Peace of this Kingdome:

"THESE are therefore in his Majesties name to charge and command you and every of you, upon sight hereof, to be aiding and assisting to Robert Stephens, his Majesties Messenger for the Press, in making diligent search in all suspected places, and to seize all such Books, Pamphletts, and Pictures, as he shall be informed of in any Booksellers, Printers, Binders Shops or Warehouses,

[*The arms of the  
Chief-Justice Jeffreys.*]

GEO: JEFFREYS.

or in any Ship or Vessel, or other place whatsoever, to the end they may be disposed off according to Law. Likewise, if you shall be informed off the Authors, Printers, Publishers, or any other Persons in whose Custody you shall find such Books, Pamphletts, or Pictures, you are to apprehend and bring before me, or any of his Majesties Justices of the Court of King's Bench, or some other of his Majesties Justices of the Peace, to be proceeded against according to Law. Hereof fail not at your Perills. Dated the 1st day of September Anno Dom. 1684.

"To all Mayors, Justices, Sheriffs, Bailiffs, Constables, Headboroughs, and all other Officers and Ministers whom these may concern.

"To Robert Stephens, Messenger for the Press, and Custom-house Waiter and Searcher."

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The Government now took a hint from the estimable judge whose arms and signature are on the margin; and issued one of these general-warrants, that is to say, a warrant *naming no person*, and which left it to the messengers to seize whomsoever they might suspect to be the author of the seditious and treasonable article in the *North Briton*, and which also authorized them to seize papers, etc., belonging to such suspected person. The messengers began, just as might have been expected, by arresting an entirely innocent person; then they took into custody the publisher, who gave up the names of the printer and of the author, the latter being Wilkes, then a member of the House of Commons. They went to arrest him, but he so frightened them by his bold front, in assuring them they were acting under an illegal warrant, and by his threats, that they went away; but in the

morning they returned, took him, and carried him to Lord Halifax, the Secretary of State. Presently he saw a friend, Lord Temple, who hurried off to get a writ of *habeas corpus*, but, before the clerk could get it ready, Wilkes, who refused to answer questions, was carried off in a coach to the Tower, and closely confined. But the writ soon followed him, and forced open even those strong Tower gates, and compelled his captors to produce him at Westminster Hall; where he defended himself with his usual courage and audacity, affirmed there was a dark plan on foot against the liberties of the nation, and that ministers had tried to make him a victim because he could neither be bought nor corrupted. The Lord Chief-Justice Pratt delivered the opinion of the judges, that the commitment and the warrant were not in themselves illegal, there being numerous precedents, but that Mr. Wilkes was protected from their operation by the privilege of Parliament. He was accordingly discharged in a kind of triumph, but immediately prosecuted by the Attorney-General for the libel. And then began a series of struggles betwixt Wilkes and the Ministry, in which the people, to an immense extent, took the part of the former and looked upon him as a second Pym or Hampden, championing the public liberties; and though he was of a very different and vastly inferior mettle to theirs, doubtless John Wilkes did help the nation to stem the constantly rising tide of governmental despotism.

The other great guarantees to which we referred in the title of this chapter are the jury, the free press, and the right of free public meeting and association. These, and the writ of *habeas corpus*, are the four fundamental bases on which have been slowly and laboriously erected the majestic temple of English civil liberty. And what do they all amount to but this?—the right of men to commune freely with each other by the pen or the tongue—freedom from all personal control except under the operation and sanction of the law—and an honest, impartial judgment by our equals—the jury—if the law is set in operation against us. Take what country or what time you will, and you will always find these same questions rising up in the contests between despotism and liberty. And no wonder; for if truth and error can but be fairly set face to face, the triumph of the former is assured.

And we perceive, in looking at the policy of the Tory ministers of the last century and of the beginning of the present one, that they knew perfectly the value to the people of these organic instruments, and that they were unwearied in their efforts to tamper with

and weaken, and—had they so far succeeded—ultimately to destroy them. For there is no stopping-place either for despotism or for liberty ; each must go on in its respective path. We shall now glance at some of the more salient political incidents affecting these guarantees.

First, as to juries. Their introduction has been generally ascribed to Alfred, and it would be pleasant to have such a fact to add to the many glorious features of his reign. But, on the whole, it is probable he only brought into more general use, and into a higher state of utility, this inestimable instrument of justice between man and man. So early as the period of the Saxon Heptarchy mention is made of six Welsh and six Anglo-Saxon freemen, men of property, who were appointed to try causes between England and Wales, and who were made responsible, with their whole estates, for false verdicts. In the early part of the tenth century the plaintiff and the defendant used to feed the jury, and thence arose the custom of denying them sustenance after the evidence had been heard, and which has been carried to so ludicrous an extent, that on one occasion jurors were fined for having fruit in their pockets when they withdrew to consider their verdict, though the fruit was not eaten. Another jury (at Sudbury) growing restive under this severe treatment, and unable to agree, broke their way out of the court, and ran off to their homes. All-powerful for good, and especially for liberty, as this institution has proved, evil governments have found many modes of impairing its power or corrupting its character. In former days judges did not hesitate to threaten juries, while considering their verdict, or when they were returning one hostile to the judge's directions. Governments have even gone so far as to punish them afterwards for displeasing verdicts. But these were interferences so obviously in opposition to all sense of natural law and justice, that they could exist only in those dark, troublous times when liberty seems destined, like individual men, to taste the purifying influences of sorrow, conflict, and despair, preparatory to some new advance and triumph. But it was different with those cases where questions of law and precedent could be brought in to confuse or to arbitrarily narrow the boundary lines dividing the province of the judge from that of the jury. It was in such cases, accordingly, that Tory governments and Tory judges (for, alas, there were Tory judges in those days ; judges, we mean, belonging to a party, though acting in the name of the nation) sought to restrict the power and functions of juries. Thus, in the case of Penn, a Quaker, indicted for *seditionally*

preaching to a multitude *tumultuously* assembled, the jury simply found him guilty of speaking to people in Gracechurch Street; and when the Recorder said to them that no doubt they meant he had been speaking to a *tumult* of people there, the foremen replied they allowed no such thing, but adhered to their verdict. The Recorder refused to receive it thus. They withdrew, reconsidered, and then acquitted the prisoner. In consequence, they were themselves fined forty marks each, and imprisoned till the payment should be made. One of the jurors, Edward Bushell (let us cherish the name of all such noble but obscure pioneers of liberty), refused to pay, sued out a writ of *habeas corpus*, appeared before Lord Chief-Justice Vaughan, and there had the heart-felt delight to hear the learned Lord say—"If the judge, having heard the evidence given in court (for he knows no other), shall tell the jury upon this evidence that the law is for the crown, and they, under the pain of fine and imprisonment, are to find accordingly, every man sees that the jury is but a troublesome delay, great charge, and of no use in determining right and wrong; and therefore the trials by them may be better abolished than continued; which were a strange and new-found conclusion, after a trial so celebrated for many hundred of years in this country." The stout-hearted juror was discharged; and so the Government and its creatures were finally stopped in that direction.

But among the most striking of the causes in which juries, free press, and free meetings were struck at by the Government, were those in which Mr., afterwards Lord, Erskine stood forth as the popular champion. He was the firm adherent of Fox in his political views, and possessed, perhaps, of even a mightier power of oratory than that great statesman. But he had his mission quite apart from the one so nobly fulfilled by Fox. Erskine was a lawyer; and it is hardly possible to overrate the value of the splendid services he rendered to the cause of civil liberty, by his combination of profound legal knowledge, glorious eloquence, patriotic feeling, and indomitable courage. Early in his official career he was obliged to resign, because of his refusal to abandon Thomas Paine when prosecuted for his "*Rights of Man*." How little sympathy Erskine had with Paine's other views he showed unmistakably, when, some years later, he himself conducted the prosecution of Paine's "*Age of Reason*." It will not be without interest, we think, for our readers to note a little in detail some of the trials in which Erskine was engaged, what principles he had to assail or defend, and

to recognize how much of our present happy state in all such matters is owing to the stand he then made.

The Dean of St. Asaph's case involved the question whether, in prosecutions for libel, the jury is to judge of fact alone, or of law and fact conjointly. For many years the courts had ruled that juries had no cognizance of the nature of an imputed libel beyond ascertaining how far the meaning ascribed in the indictment to passages charged as



LORD ERSKINE.

libellous was borne out by evidence; and if publication had taken place. Whether the meaning, when thus established, was in itself libellous or not, the judge undertook to decide. Erskine now determined to test that doctrine; and contended, in the Dean's case, for the right of the jury to decide whether or not the pamphlet was a libel; and then he rested the defence to the jury on the broad principle, that the publication of the tract, without any criminal intention, but, on the contrary, with a



sincere desire to benefit the country, was not libellous. The jury returned a verdict of "guilty of publishing only." We can give only passages from the exciting scene that ensued:—

"*Mr. Justice Buller*—If you find him guilty of publication, you must not say the word *only*.

"*Mr. Erskine*—By that they meant there was no sedition.

"*A Juror*—We only find him guilty of publishing: we do not find anything else.

"*Mr. Justice Buller*—If you only attend to what is said, there is no question or doubt."

And he then repeated a kind of legal explanation of the most strictly formal character, showing that all was clear enough, and that to include the word *only* would *negative* the *inuendoes* of the indictment. Of course they would; and perfectly well counsel and jury knew what they were about, and what they were determined upon, but equally determined was the judge.

"*Mr. Justice Buller*—You say he is guilty of publishing the pamphlet, and that the meaning of the *inuendoes* is as stated in the indictment?

"*A Juror*—Certainly.

"*Mr. Erskine*—Is the word *only* to stand as part of your verdict?

"*A Juror*—Certainly.

"*Mr. Erskine*—Then I insist it shall be recorded.

"*Mr. Justice Buller*—Then the verdict must be misunderstood. Let me understand the jury.

"*Mr. Erskine*—The jury do understand their verdict.

"*Mr. Justice Buller*—Sir, I will not be interrupted.

"*Mr. Erskine*—I stand here as an advocate for a brother citizen, and I desire that the word *only* may be recorded.

"*Mr. Justice Buller*—Sit down, sir! Remember your duty, or I shall be obliged to proceed in another manner.

"*Mr. Erskine*—Your lordship may proceed in what manner you think fit. I know my duty as well as your lordship knows yours, and shall not alter my conduct."

The judge, after a protracted contest, skilfully turned the issue in a new direction, and apparently to the end he wanted, by obtaining a verdict from the jury that they found the dean guilty of publication, but that whether a libel or not they did not find, and that the intention they left to the court. But even then, during this settlement, one

juror had the courage to say, "That is not the verdict;" but the others were browbeaten into the kind of compromise we have indicated. Finally, the question was disposed of by Mr. Fox's Libel Bill in 1792, which declared the right of the jury to return a general verdict on the whole matter—an inestimable right, indeed, as England would have found to its cost very soon, if it had not then been so settled.

But the grandest of all these trials (which were begun by Government in a spirit of the most lawless intimidation, but ended in fixing more firmly in the hearts of the people the love for, and right estimation of, the guarantees for liberty that were being assailed) was the prosecution of Horne Tooke, Hardy, and Thelwall, in 1794. The abstract power of Parliament as against the King having now, after the Revolution of 1688, ceased to be in danger, the purification of Parliament, and the preparation of it to do its duty to the people at large, naturally became the next great question; in other words, Reform of Parliament now began to be talked of, and to be advocated by many and eloquent lips, and to be the subject of meetings and associations. How was this portentous movement to be met? Not, of course, by free discussion, and still less by conciliation. No; treat every reformer, who makes a single public movement to obtain reform, as a traitor! That was the recipe of our Tory and paternal Government. And mark how they proceeded. They determined to work what has been called the law of *constructive* treason. Hardy was first tried. The charge against him was no less than that of compassing the death of the King, and the evidence of his intentions was made to consist in an alleged conspiracy to subvert by force the constitution, *under pretence of procuring, by legal means, a reform of the House of Commons*. So that, by successive steps of ingenious legal reasoning, the reformer was *constructed* into a traitor; and there only needed a pliant jury to send him off to the block or the gallows. Let the reader think of the position of civil liberty in this country when such things could be attempted on such pretences, and then let him remember with astonishment that all this occurred only sixty-six years ago.

The Parliament, as if to show how detestable in its eyes were the men who dared to think it could need any reformation, actually passed a bill, declaring in the preamble that such a conspiracy did exist; thus going half-way to prepare juries to do that which was expected from them. The trial came on, and England had reason to be grateful

for her defender. Erskine was the counsel. He knew well—too well—the solemnity of the occasion, and the imminence of the danger he had then to confront. But he rose to the height of his argument. He sought at first simply to convince the jury by his searching logic and by his exhaustive legal knowledge. He showed them with what strictness Edward III.'s treason-law had been always limited and defined. He also showed them that granting there had been the intention to hold a convention to obtain reform; nay, granting even that that intention might be construed into a conspiracy to levy war, still he denied that the resulting offence would be the high treason that was charged against the prisoner, unless the conspiracy for war was directly pointed against the King's person. Now, it had been proved by the evidence that there was no disaffection personally towards the King, and Erskine knew the strength of his position in that respect. With passionate eloquence, rising by degrees to higher and higher flights, he made them see that there should be the clearest possible evidence of evil intention in any case, and in this especially so, because the intention alleged was so utterly foreign to the avowed aims of the prisoner. He showed these aims to be generally the same as those of the Earl of Chatham, Burke, and of Pitt, *the minister himself* (who had at one time been a favourer of parliamentary reform); nay, that the precise measure of reform now sought had been advocated by a member of the Pitt cabinet, the Duke of Richmond. It was not the prisoner Hardy only, or the other prisoners whose trials had to follow, or Erskine, who breathed again freely, as the verdict, "Not guilty," was delivered, but all that was honest, and liberal, and enlightened through England. Tooke and Thelwall were successively acquitted as Hardy had been; and then all the other intended prosecutions were abandoned. The younger among our readers may understand now why it is they hear from time to time of solemn dinners being still held annually, in honour of these great trials by jury, and of the institution which protected Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall from their attempted judicial murder. It is facts like these that can alone bring home to us the popularity of such terrible satirists as Junius, and enable us to realize the reception that our forefathers gave to many of the sentences from that brilliant pen; these for instance—"Let it be impressed on your minds, let it be instilled into your children, that the liberty of the press is the palladium of all the civil, political, and religious rights of an Englishman; and that the right of juries to

return a general verdict, in all cases whatsoever, is an essential part of our constitution, not to be controlled or limited by the judges, not, in any shape, questionable by the legislative." Our ancestors struggled and suffered to establish these truths; we have only to maintain them, and recreant indeed we must be if we ever allow them to be touched by a hostile hand.

Our rapidly narrowing space warns us we can only briefly refer to any more of these past struggles of the press to maintain itself free. It is noticeable how the spirit of persecution rose between the years 1808 and 1811. Prior to 1808, the yearly average of informations against the press had been two; while in the years just specified, they amounted to an average of nearly fourteen! The prosecuting taste grew by what it fed on. In the dismal period now under review Cobbett was prosecuted and imprisoned; Leigh Hunt and his brother experienced a similar fate; so also did another poet, Robert Montgomery, at Sheffield. Lord (then Mr.) Brougham was counsel for the Hunts; and the judge, Lord, Ellenborough, did not hesitate to speak of the counsel as being "inoculated with all the poison of the libel"; and he told the jury that the issue to be tried was whether Englishmen were to live for the future under the dominion of libellers. In 1817, Lord Sidmouth, growing impatient of the slow process of ordinary law, sent a circular to the lord-lieutenants of counties, stating that a single justice of the peace might issue a warrant against any one charged on oath with libel, and compel him to give bail. Miss Martineau rightly calls this "the most daring invasion of public liberty that had been attempted since the time of the Stuarts."

All this while the cry for reform was maintained more or less vehemently; but, before that cry was to be successful, blood was to be shed in our own public places, and a new revolution to break out in a neighbouring country. In 1819 the Tory party shewed that they were prepared for even more daring encroachments than the act Miss Martineau stigmatizes. The middle classes had begun to draw back, moved alike by the menacing aspect of the upper classes in one direction, and of the lower classes in another. But the working-men of the country were growing more and more desperate, more and more prepared to retaliate in the same spirit of ferocity that the Government was perpetually teaching. At a meeting, for instance, at Birch, near Middleton, when petitions, as usual, were moved, one Benbow, who had just left prison, urged a march to London, "to present their

petition at the point of the sword and pike." Loud cheers followed, and cries of "Ay, that's the way!" The week after, Benbow was on his way to America. At last came the long-expected collision. On the 16th of August, 1819, a great meeting for reform was held in St. Peter's Field, Manchester. Its views and objects, as illustrated by its flags, were "Unity and Strength," "Liberty and Fraternity," "Parliaments Annual," "Suffrage Universal." Eighty thousand persons were present. But how thoroughly loyal and English to the backbone was that mighty mass, if there had been but one grain of sense or patriotism in the heads of those who had to deal with them to understand it, and appeal to its better qualities, we may gather even from such slight indications as the tunes played—"Rule Britannia!" and "God save the King!" These were the strains that even then were found to be most in unison with the feelings of that vast assembly. Henry Hunt next began to address the people, but was quickly interrupted. A warrant was out for his apprehension, and there were magistrates insane enough, or wicked enough, to take that occasion to put it in force, even though they had been warned the arrest could only be made by soldiers, through so dense a body. On came the soldiery, some forty of the yeomanry and some three hundred and twenty hussars. The people shouted when they saw them, either to indicate their good-will or in obedience to Hunt's demand, who thought it was merely an attempt to frighten the meeting and to defeat its object.

The forty yeomanry halted two or three minutes, then waved their swords and advanced right into the mass, and were there unavoidably divided and brought to a stand-still. Then the colonel of the hussars asked the Chairman of the Bench of Magistrates what he should do. "Good God! sir," replied the latter, "do you not see how they are attacking the yeomanry? Disperse the crowd!" "Forward!" was the colonel's immediate command; and the whole body of hussars charged right into the compact multitude, striking on all sides with their swords. "Stand fast!" cried Bamford, one of the people's leaders, a man who has been since well known and esteemed; "and," he continues, "there was a general cry in our quarter of 'stand fast.' The cavalry were in confusion; they evidently could not, with all the weight of man and horse, penetrate that compact mass of human beings, and their sabres were plied to hew a way through naked, held-up hands, and defenceless heads; and then chopped limbs and wound-gaping skulls were seen,

and groans and cries were mingled with the din of that horrid confusion. 'Ah! ah!' 'For shame! for shame!' was shouted. Then 'Break! break! They are killing them in front, and they cannot get away.' And there was a general cry of 'Break! break!' For a moment the crowd held back as in a panic; then there was a rush, heavy and resistless as a headlong sea, and a sound like low thunder, with screams, prayers, and imprecations from the crowd, moiled and sabre-doomed, who could not escape. In ten minutes from the commencement of the havoc the field was an open and almost deserted space. The hustings remained, with a few broken and hewed flag-staves erect, and a torn and gashed banner or two dropping; whilst over the whole field were strewed caps, bonnets, hats, shawls, and shoes, and other parts of male and female dress, trampled, torn, and bloody. Several mounds of human beings still remained, where they had fallen, crushed down and smothered. Some of these still groaning; others, with staring eyes, were gasping for breath, and others would never breathe more. Five or six persons were killed, and at least seventy more were known to be injured, independent of those who were privately treated, and some of whom may have also died of their injuries." This was the "Manchester massacre." This was what a reform meeting had to expect, only thirteen years before the Reform Bill passed. Whatever emotions of horror were felt by the people of England, the Government, true to itself, in the name of the Prince Regent, thanked and commended magistracy and soldiery for all they had done. Despotic Governments have but one recipe for such cases, —more coercion!—since the previous coercion had not succeeded well enough. Then were framed Lord Sidmouth's famous, or infamous, six Acts, which left scarcely a shadow of either of the great securities we have spoken of, *habeas corpus*, free press, or free meetings; and though the fourth, the jury, could not be so directly assailed, still it was greatly affected and corrupted by the influence or intimidation of judges, and the pressure of the then all-powerful Tory party.

Of course, under such treatment, there was sure to be certain men who would be maddened by it, and would proceed to any extremities. A greater horror soon overshadowed England even than the affair at St. Peter's Field. A sanguinary conspiracy was formed for the actual destruction of the ministers. But these ministers had one of their own instruments, Edwards, among the guilty and foolish men. He instigated them to the deed—he distributed hand grenades and other

atrocious weapons—he advised the blowing up of the House of Commons. Of course in due time the Cato Street conspiracy was itself blown to the four winds. Thistlewood and others suffered; but Edwards was neither produced as a witness nor tried as a criminal, but allowed to go free, and was seen subsequently in possession of ample funds, blood-money, which an unprincipled Government had given to him. Again we ask, can our readers readily understand all this as having taken place within the last forty-one years? Gradually, however, a healthier tone began to grow; then in 1830 came the French Revolution; and two years later the Reform Bill was passed. And now, looking back, we perceive how unreal were all the fears—how cruel and how unjust was all the policy of those anti-reforming governments. May we now know how to use the lesson thus learned, now that a new reform is demanded in the interests of the working-classes!

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### ON THE PROGRESS OF CIVIL LIBERTY IN CERTAIN SOCIAL QUESTIONS.

It is to the eternal honour of the Quakers that they were the first men in modern times to deal vigorously with the iniquities of slavery and the slave trade. We have already shown, in our earlier chapters, that we had at one period a system of irregular domestic slavery among us, quite apart from and far worse than the state of serfdom in which such large classes of the people were kept. And down even to the seventeenth century it was not uncommon to hear of persons being kidnapped, and sent to the colonies as slaves. Criminals were also often treated thus. It was the English Government that established in America that evil which is now paralyzing the whole life of the republic, and threatening to give relief only at the expense of a dissolution of the confederacy. But when Penn founded his noble colony of Pennsylvania, on the principles of peace, toleration, and liberty, and on the practical basis (by way of proof of the value of his principles) of an honourable purchase of the proprietary rights of the natives, the young community soon came to a resolution that buying, selling, and holding men in slavery was inconsistent with Christianity. This was about the year 1699. Penn himself obtained admission for coloured

people to the regular religious meetings. And the movement thus begun went on; till, in 1780, not one slave was owned by a member of the Society of Friends.

The example, however, was apparently lost at home; for, says the historian of the peace, "it is scarcely possible for us to conceive the nature and virulence of the opposition to slavery, and even of the slave trade, in the early days of the question. Many defended slavery (in which they included the slave trade) as scriptural. Some scholars defended it as classical, and talked of Epictetus. Lord Eldon defended it as constitutional. General Gascoigne asserted it not only to be necessary, but praiseworthy and beautiful—an institution which, if it had not always existed, ought always to have existed." The first important step was taken by Granville Sharp, who, in 1765, came forward as the protector of a slave who had been abandoned by his owner in England while suffering from disease and misery, and claimed again, when recovered by the skill and kindness of Mr. Sharp's brother. The case came before the King's Bench in 1772, which decided that in England the master's right could not be maintained; in other words, that this was free soil, and whoever touched it ceased to be a slave. This was a noble beginning; yet we may see how deeply the crime had eaten into the heart of society, when we read that in 1783 an action was brought by certain underwriters against the owners of a ship, the captain of which, it was alleged, had thrown overboard one hundred and thirty-two sickly slaves, in order to claim their value as so much lost goods! The drowning of the living men was admitted, and the defence was a deficiency of water; but as the crew had not even been put on a reduced allowance, it is clear the excuse was untrue. For this wholesale murder no prosecution was instituted; nor does any one seem to have thought such a procedure necessary. But there was then growing up a young student, who was destined to point the way to a vigorous and sustained warfare against such atrocities. In 1785 a prize essay was proposed by the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge on the theme—"Is it allowable to enslave men without their consent?" Clarkson went to London to make inquiries about the African slave trade, and there obtained such an awful amount of testimony relating to the cruelties and indescribable abominations of that trade, that he could neither sleep nor rest until he had disburdened his mind. He wrote his essay, gained the prize, and then devoted himself to the cause of the poor



negro, resolutely putting aside all other aims, and sacrificing every personal interest. He it was who roused Wilberforce into action, though the latter told Clarkson the subject had often employed his thoughts, and was near to his heart. Meetings were held, a committee formed, agitation begun, and Wilberforce accepted the post of the leader of the movement in Parliament. He obtained powerful allies. Pitt on one occasion, when Wilberforce was ill, brought the subject



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before the House, and carried a resolution pledging the Commons to consider it during the next session. Burke and Fox also became supporters. But no real advance could be made, through so obstructive a Parliament as then sat. If the Commons passed a bill, which they did at last in 1796, the Lords threw it out. Failure after failure was thus experienced; and it was not until 1807 that the abolition of the slave trade was finally carried through both Houses under the

Grenville Administration. To Clarkson and to Wilberforce this grand instalment of justice was due.

It required many years more, and renewed exertions, and a fresh generation of men, conspicuous among whom stand Fowell Buxton and Henry Brougham, to secure the abolition of slavery itself, which still prevailed in our colonies. And that portion of the great movement had its own special martyr—Smith, the missionary of Demerara, who had distinguished himself by his zeal in educating and civilizing the negro slave. A revolt broke out, but the negroes, through his teaching, shed no blood. They were put down, and then their Christian masters, the high, pure-blooded English gentlemen, who were in so many cases the owners, slaughtered the slaves by hundreds, tried the noble missionary, and sentenced him to death, and expelled his companions. Smith died in prison, but his soul lived and swept over the world in resistless appeal to the common instincts of humanity, and to the outraged feelings and principles of religion. A few years later the giant iniquity was destroyed at one blow by the Emancipation Act, which passed in 1834, and for which the country paid twenty millions in compensation to the slave-owners. This was indeed one of the national acts that justify an Englishman's pride of country. And he stands alone in the power of feeling and expressing such pride, for up to this moment no other country has followed our example. If anything can justify our resting in peace, from the recollection of our former wrong-doing in this matter, it is such a fact as this, which admits of no misconstruction. We made a great sacrifice to perform a great duty. To the many other debts of gratitude we owe to Lord Brougham, for his services in the cause of civil and religious liberty, let us never forget to add the obligation we have incurred to him and the Grey ministry for Negro Emancipation. England has now not a single slave in all her vast and widely-dispersed dominions; though it would be wrong and idle to deny that there is a wide space between actual freedom and actual slavery, and that too many British subjects yet occupy such ground.

It may seem strange to include the amelioration of our criminal law in pages that deal with the progress of civil liberty, but it does not follow that a man ceases to be a citizen because he offends against the laws of his country, still less that he shall be deprived of

all rights because he must be deprived of some ; and least of all that he shall be subject to cruel, or brutalizing, or even undue punishments when he is convicted. Then, again, the treatment of the criminal population reacts on those who have to determine, to administer, or to witness the treatment. You may soon unfit men for the enjoyment or even the appreciation of liberty, by making them once taste the demoralizing but fascinating pleasure of irresponsible power. The whole tone of



SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY.

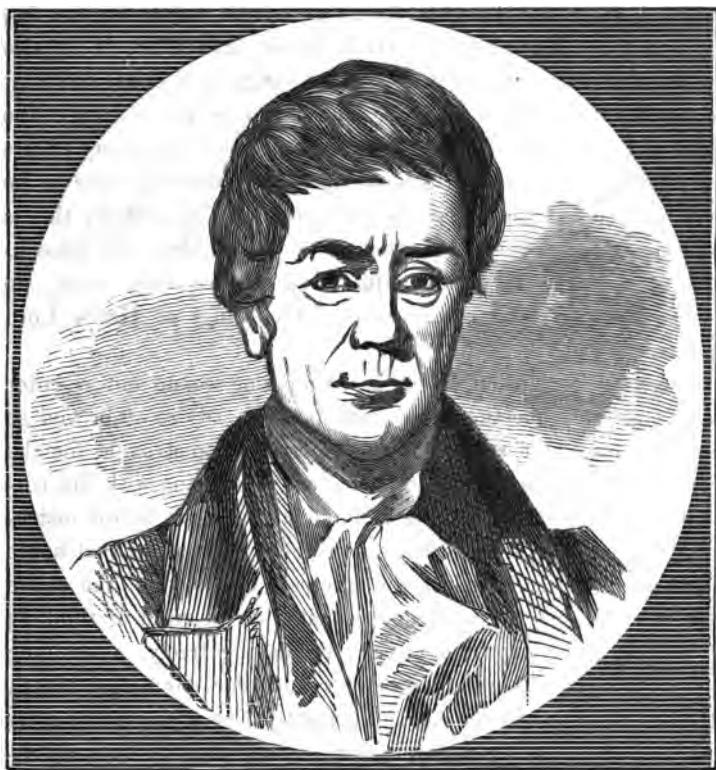
society, in short, will be affected by the humane and enlightened, or by the barbarous and prejudiced, modes of dealing with the erring classes. But if all these are not sufficient reasons, let us then mention one more—the effect upon the friends and relatives of the criminals. Was there no question of civil liberty, for instance, when men were strung up like so many wild beasts, for stealing, and other petty crimes against property, leaving their wives and children to the workhouse,

or the streets, or to go on, perhaps, to the same terrible end? But let us particularize a few facts. In the year 1785, ninety-seven persons were executed in London alone for stealing from shops, etc., to the value of 5s. In 1816, there was, as we are told by Sir Samuel Romilly, the great reformer of our savage criminal code, a child in Newgate not ten years old under sentence of death for this same offence; and the Recorder declared publicly that it was intended to enforce the law strictly in future, to check the increase of youthful depravity. Who can help wishing that this man could have been made to experience but for one day the anguish of the parents of such a child so doomed?

Sir S. Romilly gives us one very striking proof of how political questions may bear upon social questions, which is but proving the same thing, in its converse form, that we have already asserted. He says, "If any person be desirous of having an adequate idea of the mischievous effects which have been produced in this country by the French Revolution and all its attendant horrors, he should attempt some legislative reform on humane and liberal principles. He will then find, not only what a stupid dread of innovation, but what a savage spirit it has infused into the minds of many of his countrymen. It is but a few nights ago that while I was standing at the bar of the House of Commons, a young man, the brother of a peer, whose name is not worth setting down, came up to me, and breathing in my face the nauseous fumes of his undigested debauch, stammered out, 'I am against your bill, and am for hanging all.' I was confounded; and, endeavouring to find out some excuse for him, I observed that I supposed he meant that the certainty of punishment affording the only prospect of suppressing crimes, the laws, whatever they are, ought to be executed! 'No, no,' he said, 'it is not that; there is no good done by mercy. They only get worse. I would hang them all up at once.'"

Romilly, however, kept alive the sacred fire of humanity in his own breast, and by degrees persuaded his brother legislators to advance with him, though with slow and hesitating steps. He taught them that certainty not severity of punishment was the grand principle; and that milder measures encouraged those to prosecute who were deterred by severe ones. The very name of criminal reform had not been heard in Parliament for nearly sixty years when Romilly brought forward successfully one of his first bills, in 1808, namely, that for repealing the

punishment of death for stealing 5s. from the person privately. The number of prosecutions immediately increased, exactly as Romilly's words and principles had foreshown they would; but people would see in them only additional evidence of the correctness of their old belief—to deter you must be severe. Romilly could make no more way in consequence. If he got a bill through the Commons, it stopped in the Lords. But his work was surely progressing all the



LORD BROUGHAM.

while; and when he was unable to continue his exertions, Sir James Macintosh supplied his place, and so by degrees there was erased from the statute-book one after another of those bloody laws, which show that men like Draco are not confined to any country, or time, or state of civilization; and that we in England have plenty of things to look back upon, and be ashamed of, whenever we feel inclined to lift the head too high, or let the voice assume too haughty a tone.

Seventy-two thousand thieves were hanged during one king's reign, Henry VIII! If we were compelled to decide which was the greater criminal of the two, the thief, or the law that could nurse such a population for such uses, we should be strongly inclined to give the thief the benefit of the comparison.

And such thoughts suggest to us a still larger and more pertinent theme—that of education—as the greatest of all the instruments of civil liberty. No uneducated people can be a really free people: their own natures, their own thoughts, their own mental habits are not free to begin with. Knowledge is truly power, and often it is also despotism; but only because the power belongs to a class, and that that class uses it selfishly against the bulk of the people. Hence the necessity of national education. We don't submit to voluntary efforts for the punishment of crime; by what right, then, do we profess to be content with such agencies for its prevention? Undoubtedly this is one of the next great movements that we or our children will have to make, and to carry to a successful issue. Here, once more, we must record our grateful recollections of the doings of Henry Lord Brougham.

And now, in conclusion, let us ask, supposing we do not re-enter upon the very same questions that have been already so often and so solemnly decided—that we do not once more have to struggle for the right to worship God as we please, while not interfering with the corresponding right of others; or the right to tax ourselves by the instrumentality of the people's own house; or the right to make that house more and more perfectly reflect the interests and views of the entire community as advancing knowledge permits; or the right of thinking freely, writing freely, speaking freely, publishing freely, assembling freely; or the right of securing prompt remedy for any illegal breach of individual freedom; or the right of being tried by a jury and not by a judge, and still less by a government;—supposing we have no reaction to deal with in these and similar matters, to occupy and distract attention, and create a bad feeling in the place of the generally good feeling that now exists through all parts of the community, what, then, will there be to rouse the energies of the national character, and to reward the pioneers in new paths of progress for their exertions? We think we may answer that there lies before us a grander question than any that has yet been solved, and the right solution of which promises more glorious results than has ever yet attended any agi-

tation. But the dangers and difficulties are in proportion to the promised gain and glory. One need but to write the words—the relation of capital and labour—to rouse, in hosts of mind, an uneasy sense of something that they think ought to be kept out of sight if possible, or made light of when it does compel a moment's attention, and which at all times should be treated as a matter upon which there is nothing to be said or done, but to leave everything to find its own natural or unnatural termination or settlement. But was it thus our forefathers dealt with the perilous questions that beset them, and which have been now solved, precisely because they were courageous enough to grapple with them boldly? Already the opinions of the working classes with regard to this vital question are put forward in Parliament, as reasons why they should not be trusted with the franchise. Why, if those opinions are wrong, that fact is one of the strongest reasons why they *should* have their advocates in Parliament, that truth and error might there grapple again as they have grappled before, and capital and labour alike watch the combat, and grow wiser from the result. Where would have been the triumph of Free Trade if all Protectionists had been kept out of Parliament? So, on economical questions, what possible security can there be for the diffusion of right views, or their establishment and influence in legislation, if one party alone is represented—the party of capital—no matter how correct the views of that party may abstractedly be? It suffices to know they sit as judges in a matter where their own interests are deeply involved, to know also their judgment can have no permanent value; and that, in fact, they are compromising the very truths they enunciate, if they are truths, by their own equivocal position. Surely nothing can be clearer to any attentive reader of recent history than the deduction that all men must be admitted, sooner or later, to share in the common fruits of liberty, civilization, and scientific knowledge. If so, it is equally clear that this cannot be done by one favoured class dispensing to another less favoured just what it may please to give, as so much mere charity or bounty. No, men must meet each other as men and brothers; and discuss, and explain, and conciliate, and not stand aloof in jealous dignity, or equally jealous dislike, because this man is an employer, that man one of the employed; this man rich, that man poor; this man in possession of political power, that man lacking, but desiring such power. Would we might here quote the noble paragraphs with which Miss Martineau (a writer so greatly esteemed, even by orthodox

economical authorities, for her labours in the cause of their favourite science) concludes her "History of the Peace," but they would occupy too much space. We select, therefore, merely a few sentences, and with them conclude these imperfect, but we hope not altogether unprofitable, notices of the History of Progress in Civil and Religious Liberty. Amongst all our progress, she says:—"The tremendous labour question remains absolutely untouched—the question whether the toil of a life is not to provide for a sufficiency of bread? No thoughtful man can for a moment suppose that this question can be put aside. No man with a head and a heart can suppose that any considerable class of a nation will submit for ever to toil incessantly for bare necessities, without comfort, ease, or luxury now, without prospect for their children, and without a hope for their old age. A social idea or system which compels such a state of things must be, in so far, worn out." And she ends by saying:—"The materials for working out a better state is before us, and the question of the rights of labour is pressing upon us. We have sciences brightening around us which may teach us to increase indefinitely our supply of food. We have labourers everywhere who are as capable as any men above them of domestic solicitude, and who will not be more reckless about a provision for their families than gentlemen are, when once the natural affections of the citizen-parents are allowed free scope. . . . We have now the best heads and hearts occupied about this great question of the rights of labour, with impressive warnings presented to us from abroad that it cannot be neglected under a lighter penalty than ruin to us all. Is it possible that the solution should not be found? This solution may probably be the central fact of the next period of British history; and then, better than now, it may be seen that in preparation for it lies the chief interest of the preceding thirty years' peace;" and, we may add, then, better than now, will be understood what a precious kernel there yet lies untasted within this noble and beautiful fruit—Civil Liberty.

THE END.



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